



Esther Hall Mumford lives in Seattle with her family. She was born in Louisiana and is a graduate of the University of Washington. Some of her writings have been featured in local publications.

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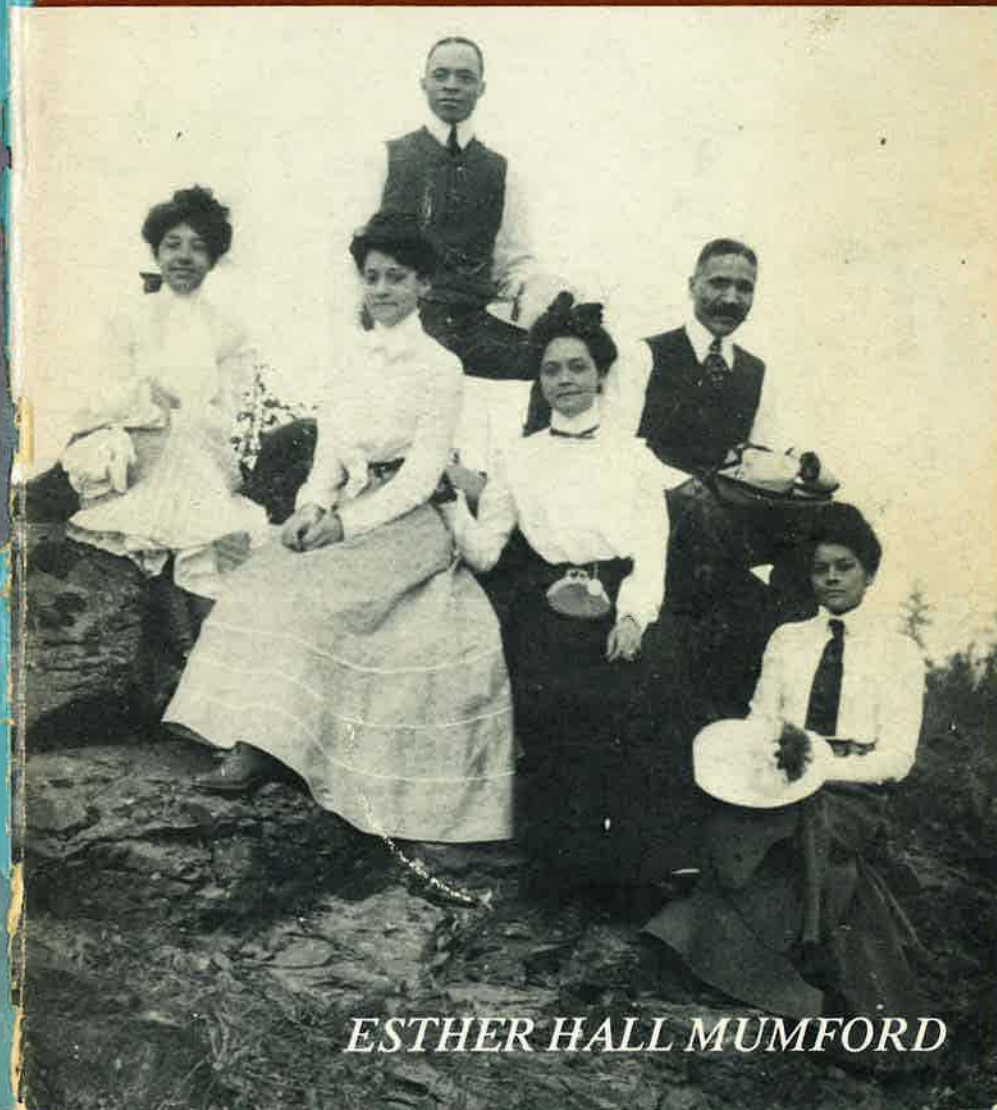
" . . . looks at black life in 19th century Seattle from many angles. The combination of newspaper files, county records and oral history gives a density to the historical picture."

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# SEATTLE'S BLACK VICTORIANS 1852-1901



ESTHER HALL MUMFORD

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**SEATTLE'S  
BLACK VICTORIANS  
1852-1901**



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**SEATTLE'S  
BLACK VICTORIANS  
1852-1901**

**ESTHER HALL MUMFORD**

**ANANSE PRESS  
SEATTLE**



Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new?  
It hath been already of old time, which was before us.

Ecclesiastes 1:1

## PREFACE

In April, 1975 I became an interviewer of the pre-1940 Aframerican community of Seattle for an Oral-Aural History program of the Washington State Records and Archives Division. Since the project was already underway when I was hired, there was little time for extensive research on the presence of black people in Seattle.

Quick examination of the limited written material relating to the group did not prepare me for what I was to learn through the interviews: the experiences of the people, how they saw the development of Seattle and the black community and what it was like to live and work here prior to the Civil Rights Movement. Not only were there connections leading all over the country, but many of the interviewees' references led to a long past in Seattle that had not been incorporated into the area's history.

One of the original aims of the project was to share the story of the common man, black, white, Filipino, miner, logger and shingle weaver, with the public. But in December, 1976 the program was terminated with its work only about half done. As the years pass, and more of the interviewees pass with them, their personal view of history becomes more precious.

This book grew out of an attempt to edit transcripts from the Oral-Aural History collection into an expanded version of the photo exhibition "Voices: The Black Experience in Seattle," which first was presented at Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center in February, 1976, and again at the Museum of History and Industry in May, 1980. Because the transcripts are overwhelmingly of the 20th Century experience of black Seattleites, I turned to a search of written material about 19th century residents with which to introduce the contemporary voices of the people. Secondary sources were minimal, and I found myself searching the pages of old newspapers, census records, property transactions, bills of sale, chattel mortgage records, church registers, and family scrap-books.

Progress was tedious, taking two and a half years to locate and examine sources and sift through reams of irrelevant material, not daring to skip a page for fear that some small, but significant, entry might be overlooked. After tracing the black presence here to 1852, I became very excited. I couldn't stop at any one point prior to 1901 because the risk was too great that some important event would escape notice. The search became a compulsion. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know.

The original transcripts were shelved. The introduction was becom-

ing the book. So much had gone on before that I wanted to tell everybody what I'd learned. All of my friends and acquaintances were regaled with anecdotes. Interviewees that I hadn't seen for years were called when I discovered information about their parents from old newspapers or census data. The collected material still excites me. I have no doubt that I shall continue to seek information about black people during this period for a long time to come.

The title was suggested by Thomas Gayton, grandson of one of the subjects in this book. It indicates a natural division of a period in which black people here experienced fewer constraints than those imposed on black people in other parts of the country, through an ever-increasing restriction of basic rights and freedoms by the turn of the century. In terms of strict definition, the Victorian era lasted from 1837 until 1901. For the purpose of this book the period extends from 1852, a year before Washington became a separate territory, and the year of the first African's arrival here, until 1901.

This book is for the general reader who, hopefully, will gain an idea of what life was like for the 19th century Aframerican in Seattle. There is still much work for the scholar. I hope that some of the subjects covered will stimulate sufficient interest to produce in-depth studies in the future.

The research material has been supplemented on occasion with some narratives from the oral history transcripts which describe the work of parents of the interviewees or even the latter's own experiences during the late Victorian period. Quotes from letters in the University of Washington's Afro-American collection are also used. Such accounts were effective in filling out descriptions of situations which have not been recorded, and they lend a strength which no journalist or clerk could lend, however flowery the language.

Reference is occasionally made to the Franklin and Newcastle populations. In combination, they were the largest black community in King County from 1891 until shortly before the close of the century. In this group were many talented individuals, some of whom later made significant contributions to Seattle. By sheer weight of numbers their presence is noteworthy, because some of the goals so ardently pursued by Seattleites became realities in Franklin much earlier than they did here.

I approached the telling of this story with much humility. I had gathered some amazing information from the Oral History project. The interviewees had lived through a tremendous amount of hardship with an extraordinary grace. From them I had learned something of the lives of Aframericans during much of this century. After talking extensively with them, visiting their homes, hearing stories about some of their treasured artifacts, I came away with a sense of what had happened before.

But there were hints of their parents' lives, snatches of memory, mention of long ago events, of large landowners, of organizations that they couldn't recall fully. Many of these bits and pieces came to life in the research, and when I finally had names and dates, I could call back and stir their memories. Sometimes the second contact worked, and sometimes it didn't. When it did, we were both happy. When it didn't, we were sorry because we felt we had lost something irreplaceable. This sharing has characterized my work with the people here. They have given unstintingly of their time, services and their recollections — and occasionally they have given an artifact or memento which will ultimately rest in a museum displaying some aspects of the life of the people here.

I have tried to keep personal biases to a minimum, while presenting the facts about the people here, and how they relate to the Black Experience elsewhere in our country. And yet, because of the general oppression so prevalent in the society at the time, I am amazed at the strength and resilience of the people under the circumstances. At this point in my life, the following quotation sums up my deepest feelings about what I've learned over the past several years.

*Batouala studied the sun as he walked. It was one of those innumerable habits which his ancestors had passed on to him. The older he became, the more he appreciated their excellence.*

*Rene Maran's **Batouala***



Families were rarely seen until after the completion of the railroads to Seattle.

## 1 Migration

*There is room for only a limited number of colored people here. Overstep that limit and there comes a clash in which the colored man must suffer . . . . The few that are here do vastly better than they would do if their numbers were increased a hundredfold . . . .*

*Editorial, "The Negro Exodus,"  
Daily Intelligencer, May 28, 1879*

The movement of black people from South to North was well established many years prior to Emancipation. Despite elaborate deterrents, persons fleeing slavery made their way North, and a very small number successfully completed the long, perilous journey West and to the Northwest. This migration continued after Emancipation, as the betrayal of Reconstruction became more evident and freedom in the South became almost as great a nightmare as slavery had been. In the last half of the 19th century violence, brutality and discrimination against black people became habitual, and in the decade from 1890 to 1900 twelve hundred and seventeen lynchings were recorded, with the vast majority of victims being black people.<sup>1</sup>

There were other reasons for coming to Seattle. These were a new people seeking a new place. They pursued adventure, economic opportunity, land and gold, and most importantly, a place where a man could be a man.

### WHO CAME

Throughout the Victorian Era they came from all regions of the country, and from several foreign countries. Before and during the Civil War almost all the settlers were men. Women and children were rarely seen. All four of the men doing business in Seattle during the early 1860s

were born in slave states. Some of these men were probably runaways who arrived in Seattle after spending time elsewhere. Although some of them list grown sons in the census data, other records indicate that they neither maintained contact with families nor even knew of their whereabouts. A few women arrived with family groups prior to 1890, but their numbers did not increase noticeably until after that time.

From the beginning of black residence in Seattle, people came in connection with their work. Men working on ships from the east coast, the British Isles, the West Indies, South America and Canada, came here and stayed. Our first black settler, African-born Manuel Lopes, was a sailor from New Bedford, Massachusetts. Phillip J. Francis worked his way up from Jamaica, stopping first in Oregon, and ex-Navyman William Grose moved to Seattle after working on the mailboat *Constitution*, which sailed from Victoria to Olympia with intermediate stops at Seattle and Tacoma.

Employees who accompanied visiting dignitaries and businessmen also moved here. John F. Cragwell, grandfather of Letcher Yarbrough, visited the city in 1890 with the Assistant Postmaster General of the United States. He was so impressed with the young vigorous city, that upon his return to Washington, D.C. he announced plans to move his family to Seattle at an early date. Despite objections from his in-laws, the Cragwells moved to Seattle in 1891.<sup>2</sup> Former federal court librarian John T. Gayton, patriarch of the well-known Gayton family, came to Seattle from Mississippi as coachman and servant of Dr. Yandell, who later served as County Coroner. The maternal grandmother of the William McIver, Sr. family moved to the city while in the employ of the Kinnear family.

For some it was the final stop in a series of moves which gradually took them westward. After the Civil War an increasing number of men began work on the railroads in such states as Illinois and Minnesota for some years, before moving further west. For Charles Harvey and Walter Washington, Seattle was the final stop after several moves. Families of these and other men were settled here following runs on trains to the city.

Most of the residents of the 1860s had spent time elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest or western Canada prior to their coming here. Archy R. Fox, William Grose, Joseph Champion, and Robert Dixon had spent some time in Victoria, British Columbia before settling in Seattle. After working in Victoria as a barber for a year, Mr. Dixon worked in Manuel Lopes's barber shop in Seattle before moving to Portland. It was during this period that he remarked to his brother Roscoe in Astoria, Oregon: "It [Seattle] won't amount to much over there."<sup>3</sup> Roscoe and his wife Theresa moved to Seattle from Astoria after their oyster house business failed in Astoria's railroad collapse. (Mrs. Theresa Brown Dixon was

brought around Cape Horn to Astoria as a young girl in the 1860s by a white family from Georgia.) Others left Oregon earlier to escape that territory's harsh anti-Black laws.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the men who had come west to the California gold fields became residents. William Thorpe came overland to California from New York before his arrival, probably by ship, in the Puget Sound area in 1879. Other men important to this study also had experience in Gold Rush California, among them William Grose and George Riley. Later, men seeking gold in other places eventually became residents and were followed by their families.

Although the period immediately following the Civil War was characterized in part by a great deal of restless movement, Seattle did not experience a sizeable increase in black population until after the completion of the railroads. The trickle was steady, and census figures for each period reflect a few additional residents. Once the railroad was completed to Puget Sound (Tacoma) in 1883, an increase in the general population, including Aframericans, was seen. Nevertheless, the Franklin-Newcastle area of King County, rather than Seattle, was the chief population center in 1895. These mining areas contributed to the growth of the city's population in the 1890s because some of the miners found the city a more attractive place to live.

The completion of the railroad to Seattle made it possible for people who were dissatisfied with their living conditions elsewhere to move here. In the late 1890s Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Canadian Pacific began to advertise low railroad fares. They also advertised and



Thomas Randolph Taylor and his family left the King County mines in the early 1890s to homestead in eastern Washington.



sold some of their vast land holdings in the Northwest to the public. Through the railroads' special immigration rates, they encouraged westward movement. The overwhelming number of immigrants were white, but Zacharias and Irene Francis Woodson availed themselves of this opportunity to start a new life. They moved here, via Canadian Pacific, about 1897 from Chicago, and later became successful real estate owners, and operators of rooming houses on Second Avenue between Seneca and University, on the present site of the Peoples Bank on Fourth Avenue, and where John J. Trippy's fur store is now located on Fifth Avenue.

As repression continued in the southern states and prejudice and discrimination in the North and East expanded in the latter years of the period, people continued to leave those places. Some of the most prominent black members of the Seattle community came here in quest of



Mrs. Sara Elizabeth Heights Maunder migrated to Seattle from Nanaimo, B.C. about 1897.

"free air" as I. I. Walker did upon leaving South Carolina in the late 1880s. Wade Hampton arrived in Seattle about 1888. He told a Republican audience in 1889 that many black Mississippi politicians had been shot and killed by Democrats, and when his turn had come, he "skipped and came North."<sup>5</sup> Robert O. Lee, first black man admitted to the bar, in 1889, was reported in the *P.I.* as having come to the Northwest seeking a place where "race prejudice would not interfere with his prosperity."<sup>6</sup>

Some of the servants who accompanied their employers to Seattle had far more compelling reasons for coming than the continuation of work. Leonard Gayton recalls that his father J. T. Gayton, left Mississippi following the disappearance of a brother who defied the warning

of local whites to end his courtship of a black girl there.<sup>7</sup> Other men left following threats on their lives by local whites.

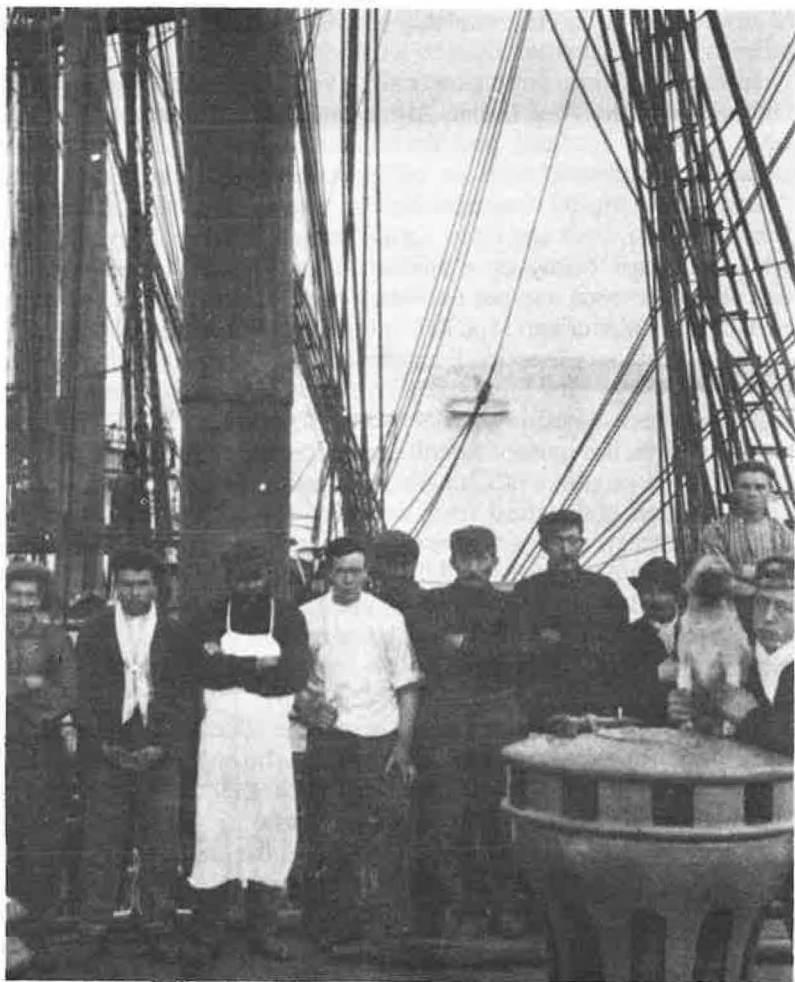
Immigrants came from practically every state and territory of the United States, the West Indies, Africa, and South America. A few came from England, Scotland, and France, as well as Canada. With them came their customs, such as calling other men, black and white, "Mister," and formal courtesies such as tipping their hats on the street. Some of those from the deep South stepped off the sidewalks to let white men pass before their northern-born contemporaries explained that such deference was not necessary here. Married people addressed each other as Mister and Mrs. in front of the children and guests.

Almost without exception they came to Seattle with expectations of a better life. They found few legal barriers erected against them, although race prejudice was often as effective as proscriptive laws. They were insulated from the more virulent expressions of prejudice by the presence of large numbers of Chinese immigrants, who bore the brunt of discrimination and hatred from much of the white population. The American Indian people also were subject to more extreme forms of bias than were Aframericans. Although native to the area, by the 1860s they were treated as undesirable aliens. Had it not been for these two groups, black people would have been treated more in keeping with their mistreatment elsewhere in the country, or as the Chinese and Indians were treated here.

From towns, villages, and farms across the country, but particularly from the South, came some talented people who enjoyed recognition in Seattle that they never would have in a state such as Mississippi after the overthrow of Reconstructions governments.

One of the city's most gifted orators during the late eighties and early nineties was a man by the name of Wade Hampton. He was quoted as saying that his father was U.S. Senator Wade Hampton, formerly South Carolina's post-Reconstruction governor, who was elected with the assistance of the white supremacist Red shirts.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Hampton came to Seattle about 1888 after a life that included bondage in Mississippi, an escape to freedom, and service in the Union Army. He was a member of the Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1868, elected to the state legislature in 1869, 1871, and 1873, followed by election to the Mississippi State Senate in 1875. The newly organized Aframerican Republican Club soon became an audience for his long, eloquent speeches, and provided a forum from whence Mr. Hampton became a sought-after speaker at many of the other local Republican clubs and all-city rallies. This "colored orator," as he was popularly described, addressed Republican campaign gatherings as far away as Blaine, near the Canadian border.



Some men came to Seattle while working on ships.

Horace and Susie Revels Cayton were very well known in Seattle during the late Victoria Era. He came to Seattle in 1886. He was educated at Alcorn College, whose president was America's first black United States senator, Hiram Revels. She came to Seattle in 1896, the year they were married. She was the fourth daughter of the Senator and Mrs. Phoebe Bass Revels. The Caytons' marriage combined the talents of the young editor who had begun the second newspaper in Seattle with an emphasis on Aframerican news, and the young lady writer who had sometimes contributed to his newspaper. After completing her basic education at Alcorn University, Mississippi, she studied at the State

Normal School in Holly Springs, Mississippi, where she taught after graduation. The earliest contribution of her work is included in the January 4, 1896 Special Edition of the *Seattle Republican*. Through the years they worked together after she became assistant editor of the paper in 1900. The *Republican* ran some of her articles and stories and some of the latter were printed in the *Seattle P.I.*, beginning in 1900.

Horace Cayton was a familiar figure in newspaper and Republican Party circles, often stumping black population centers around the state for the party during the 1890s. In 1896 he was a delegate to the St. Louis convention which nominated McKinley for president. He was elected Secretary of the Washington State Republican Editorial Association in 1898. Susie Cayton was recognized by readers of the *Seattle Sunday paper*, and was a prominent member of the small upper segment of the Aframerican social set, and active in cultural and charitable affairs. Because of their business and political involvement, the Caytons were the best known Aframericans in Seattle at the turn of the century.

### ENCOURAGEMENT OF MIGRATION

Despite numerous obstacles to the realization of their full capacities as useful human beings here, Seattle and Washington State offered considerable improvements over the places most Blacks had left, and they felt that others should share in this bounty. On an individual basis, and through some organized efforts, they encouraged others to move here. Letters of appeal influenced the movement of some of the people who became residents. People wrote back home telling of more job opportunities, better pay, and the decent treatment they received in Seattle. The *Seattle Republican* newspaper, throughout its existence, was a strong advocate of people moving to the Northwest to better their condition. Its message was disseminated by a few out of state subscriptions and by Pullman porters carrying the papers on their runs eastward. The June 15, 1900 issue stated that "two hundred, yes, three hundred colored women could find ready employment in Seattle and Tacoma tomorrow, were they here . . . Then again, there are quite a number of colored men in this county who are living in single blessedness, who would willingly change their way of living, were there sufficient damsels of their own race to choose from . . ."

One of the official aims of the State Afro-American League was the encouragement of the establishment of Bureaus of Information and Correspondence in the local units which would encourage southerners to come to the Northwest to live. Horace Cayton, editor of the *Seattle Republican*, in cooperation with Paul Schultze, made an unsuccessful attempt to recruit black men from Tennessee and other southern states



Israel I. Walker sought to encourage migration from the South in 1896 by advertising homestead land in Washington State.

### Want a Homestead?

Well, yes, there is still plenty of government lands in Washington, and we can locate you on a nice homestead if you so desire.



### City Property

In this we have some more bargains. Do not rent when you can buy for the same amount of money you can rent for.



### Any Information

About the state furnished without cost by calling at the office or addressing.

## I. I. Walker & Co.

Room "B" Burke Bldg.

SEATTLE WASH.

to settle on homesteads in the Sunnyside Valley. Some mining families in southeast King County and Kittitas County took up homesteads in the Yakima Valley in the late 1890s. They included families of Seattle residents Charles Taylor, Mary Ott Sanders, Leonard Dawson, the late LeEtta King, and Carrie Minnisee Prim Weber.

I. I. Walker attempted the recruitment of North Carolinians to settle the Prosser area through his role as agent for the Yakima Valley Land Company, and as an agent for the sale of timber and farming lands in Lincoln County.

Conrad A. Rideout had served two terms in the Arkansas legislature before his arrival here in 1891. He identified himself as advance agent for a group of well-to-do black Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas farm families who sought to move West to improve their economic and political conditions.

## REALITIES AND RUMORS

From time to time, rumors of mass migrations to the territory were circulated. The first, discussed later in this chapter, was given currency in 1865. Another rumor, which precipitated the opening quote, was circulated in 1879, and another was reported in 1889. Only one group actually migrated to Seattle. In October of 1889 about forty persons came from Chicago to Seattle to staff the new Rainier Grand Hotel at the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and Columbia Street.

The migration of black miners to Roslyn in 1888 and 1889 was the earliest and most substantial movement to Washington Territory, and some of these people later became Seattle residents.

The Roslyn migration was like a rehearsal for the Franklin migration two years later when the whole sequence of labor unrest, confrontations, and finally strikes, was repeated. This resulted in the importation of about 600 black strikebreakers to the Oregon Improvement Company mines of King County. Many of these migrants later moved to Seattle. A reverse trend also was in operation during the early years following this migration as men left Seattle seeking jobs in Franklin and, to a lesser degree, seeking other opportunities at self-realization in the wake of the large black settlement there. For example, James Orr had lived in Seattle since 1883. After finding work in the mines he was elected clerk of the Franklin School Board in 1891.

A trend established during the Victorian period, which continues today, was the coming of one or a few members of a family, followed by other members, after the earlier ones were established in jobs and living quarters.

The population in Seattle grew almost wholly from the addition of outsiders, and continued to be overwhelmingly male for the first four decades of the town's existence. From the mid-90s internal migration, principally from the mining areas and other towns, became more apparent. However, major growth still came from outside the state.

Immigration was very important for the life and growth of Seattle, and it was encouraged by the city fathers for several decades. Vying with Tacoma for industry and the railroad terminus was a preoccupation of leaders of the city, but attracting new residents was very important too. Each census return was greeted with cries of the city having been shortchanged, or that not all of the city's residents were counted.

But not everybody was welcome. The least desirable immigrants were non-white persons, and Europeans of certain racial stock, who were considered inferior. Except for those men working in Yesler's mill, the local native population was considered at best a nuisance. However, criticism of them was muted during the period each year when they returned from the hop fields and spent their earnings in town.

Although Washington Territory never had laws restricting Aframerican settlement, in contrast to Oregon's restrictive laws, the merest hint of an influx of Aframericans into the Puget Sound area was enough to cause a controversy, or to set off a political storm. At the very least, it was a cause for editorializing, and while the contents of such commentaries were not usually brutally opposed, they were unwavering in their opposition to such a movement.

The racial views of the white population in the territory were basically anti-black. The first recorded manifestation of this attitude was expressed during the early months of 1865, following the announcement of a proposed visit to Puget Sound country by a Freedman's Bureau representative. While the agent was in Victoria, British Columbia seeking that colony's reception of a group of freedmen and their families, the Territorial Legislature in Olympia discussed his proposed visit to meet with Sound mill owners to solicit employment for black mill workers.

Based on his partial success in bringing marriageable women to Seattle from the East, King County Republican Councilman Asa Mercer had requested during this session that the legislature endorse him as Immigrant Agent for the territory. This request, in conjunction with the Freedmen's Bureau agent's mission in the region, triggered a brouhaha. The legislature, dominated by Democrats, reacted to this proposal by Union party man Mercer by introducing a bill prohibiting the importation of Blacks. The "nigger in the fence" was the subject of debates, accusations, and counter accusations, and emerged a full-blown campaign issue in the election of June, 1865. Several of the area's well-known citizens were embroiled or put on the defensive regarding this issue. Letters

## QUEEN CITY CLUB

By 1901 a few businesses were largely supported by black patrons.

Headquarters for Railroad  
Porters and Hotel Wait-  
ers. Up-to-date Cafe  
in Connection.

**114 SECOND AVE., SO.**

**Rear, Under St. James Hotel.**

**Clarence Estelle**

**Richard Swope**

**MONETT'S  
SEATTLE RESTAURANT  
AND  
COFFEE SALOON.**

Opposite Yesler, Denny & Co's Store.

The public will always find the tables at this popular Eating House well supplied with the best the Market affords, and

**Meals**

Will be served to customers in the best style and at the shortest notice.

**Call and See.**

Seattle, Sept. 3, 1864.

no20tf

During the Civil War some black Seattleites were patronized by an almost all-white clientele.

were written to the newspapers denying support for black settlement in the area. Arthur Denny felt compelled to deny his advocacy of black suffrage and equality in his speeches. One of the chief resolutions in the Democratic platform read:

*Resolved, That the Democracy of Washington Territory deprecate as a most serious injustice to white labor the contemplated project of the Republican Revolutionists to introduce Negro contrabands in the territory.<sup>9</sup>*

Whether it was Mercer's intent to aid the resettlement of former slaves in Washington Territory as his opponents claimed, or whether he was interested in only aiding the resettlement of white mechanics and millmen with families as he contended, the reaction to the possibility of a group of black settlers in the territory reveals the depth of feeling against the presence of more than a handful of black residents. The introduction of black miners into the Northern Pacific coal mines in Roslyn was to cause a similar reaction in 1888 and 1889.

The absence of harsh laws, such as those proscribing Aframerican settlement in Oregon, allowed a few people to live in Seattle without harassment. While the Civil War was still raging in the South, and some folk of strong Confederate leanings here were hoping to form an alliance



with the Confederacy, men like William Hedges and M. F. Monet were running successful businesses patronized almost solely by whites.

Because their numbers were so small and their growth so slow, Blacks weren't perceived as a threat. Despite some of the population's strong partisan support of slavery and the southern way of life, the individual black person who settled and worked in Seattle in the early years of the city, appears to have enjoyed about the same amount of respect as the next person of similar status. His legal status, however, was very different until the passing of the 14th and 15th Amendments as the franchise was previously limited to white males.

Once the white male voter qualification was nullified, the prohibitions against Aframericans were informal, based on custom and prejudices transferred virtually intact to Seattle from the places of origin of the white settlers.

The record reveals no evidence of active resistance to the trickle of black people settling here. Barring a flurry of words in response to occasional rumors of a mass movement, their very slow increase drew little notice. But the idea of a mass movement of them to the territory was intolerable.

The general feeling against wholesale black immigration was best stated by an editorial appearing in the May 28, 1879 issue of the *Daily Intelligencer* during the course of extensive migration from the South by people, called "Exodusters." They were fleeing peonage, brutality, violation of their girls and women, and many other conditions similar to slavery, and seeking land that they could own. In part, the editor states:

*There is room for only a limited number of colored people here. Overstep that limit and there comes a clash in which the colored man must suffer. . . . The few that are here do vastly better than they would do if their number were increased a hundredfold.*

He includes in his commentary the experience of the Chinese as they increased from a few to "a hundred thousand of them" and their situation deteriorated from a mild sort of tolerance to one in which "every hand was turned against them."

Although black population growth was very slow, the rate was not affected by the attitude of the majority. After all, they weren't really liked anywhere in the country, and throughout the second half of the 19th century, various colonization schemes, principally for settlement in Africa, were originated and tried. The more likely explanation for this slow growth is related to Seattle's distance from large concentrations of black people, and the difficulties in getting here before the completion of the railroads, the lack of available jobs, and the number of economic recessions following the Civil War. Given the racial climate of the time, it is not likely that black men would come to, or remain

Roscoe Dixon, pictured here in 1880, came to Seattle after his oyster house failed in Astoria, Oregon's railroad collapse of the 1880s.



long in, places where large numbers of idle white men were unable to find jobs as was the case in Puget Sound towns, Seattle included, during the late 1860s and early 70s.

### WHAT THEY FOUND

There was a wide disparity between what Aframericans sought in coming to Seattle and what their actual experiences were. Since its earliest days Seattle has taken an approach of both toleration and exclusion of its black residents. Manuel Lopes, the first black resident, is a case in point. He was one of the most colorful of the early settlers, the first to order a barber's chair brought around Cape Horn, and a most fervent patriot, although foreign-born. Lopes was a drummer and each Fourth of July he headed up a procession of villagers which wound itself through the mud, and among the stumps and shanties of early Seattle. His custom of signalling mealtimes by snare drum cadences was startling and remarkable to visitors, but village people soon grew accustomed to it. Despite his activities in the infant years of the city he is totally missing from lists of 'firsts,' or histories of the city. Only his obituaries report on his early presence and activities, and both the *Times* and *P.I.* list him as 'Portugese.'<sup>10</sup>

Toleration and derision was another component of life in Seattle for black people. While harassment was generally of a spontaneous nature, it and numerous humiliations were part of the life of black people here. Various persons were identified by the hated appellation "nigger" before their name, such as a man here in 1864 who was called "nigger John" by local whites, or a woman in trouble with the law in the early eighties who was referred to as "nigger Mag" by the newspapers. A black couple, participating in costume in a Fourth of July parade, was ridiculed in 1865, the newspaper editor expressing the opinion that they "ought to attach themselves to a negro minstrel troupe. They'd make an independent fortune and worldwide fame."<sup>11</sup>

"Nigger" was in common use in 19th century Seattle. "Nigger in the woodpile" was used in newspapers to refer to political issues with dubious overtones, or in advertisements. Men were sometimes referred to as "coon" in court cases, also. Although the *Post-Intelligencer* was more sympathetic to the advancement of black aspirations than other newspapers of the 1890s it too reflected current usage of the time. Headlines of articles on Aframericans involved in crimes or suspicious circumstances were invariably out of proportion to content. Sometimes very short reports, buried well beneath several longer articles, were captioned in bold print. Almost without exception the subject was identified as "colored," or "mulatto," and less frequently "darky." Other ethnic groups were also identified by such denigrations as "dago," "siwash" for native people, and quite often "drunken Swede." Chinese names seemed to suffice, although 'Chinaman' was most frequently used and most journalists included such modifiers as "heathen" or "celestial." A "street Arab" was a boy with little parental supervision.

Most newspapers made distinctions between the hardworking, honest, respectable folks, and those who held such virtues a great deal lighter. The former were generally referred to in reports by such titles as "Mister," "Doctor," or "Honorable." Persons hauled into court as fight participants, or on charges of stealing, pimping, or drunkenness, were treated with much less courtesy. They were usually described by color reference, such as coal black, sable-faced, octoroon or mulatto, and these terms were sometimes preceded by "ugly."

Whether or not the distinctions made by the newspapers of the two classes of Aframericans were discerned by the general public is questionable. For many people they were all "niggers." It was a common term that could be heard from the barroom to the courtroom. The only people protesting the usage were those to whom it was applied, and they sometimes took quick, physical exception to the label. It was the cause of several fights between young black men and young white men of various ethnic groups over the years.

It was impossible not to notice how other people saw them. There were constant reminders of their "place." Besides their relegation to menial jobs which were never easy to secure, there was discrimination in public facilities, and the numerous annoyances that they encountered from day to day: the name-calling or snickering at them as they walked along the pavement or stood near a doorway downtown; the jostling accompanied by insults — "black \_\_\_\_\_"; the eternal nigger jokes at work, in theaters, or as cartoon characters in the papers; the references to dialect; and the quiet mirth in courtrooms where they testified in less than perfect English. Occasionally a black person would be hit in a store by a white person who took offense at his tone of voice or insistence on a point of view. There was the participa-

tion of ex-Confederate soldiers, by invitation, in the celebration of the Northern Pacific railroad link to Puget Sound in 1883, reminding them of the hated slavery days and those who had fought to hold them in that status. A Fourth of July float in 1892 featured a band composed of caricature Aframericans, and some transplanted southerners insisted on placing the detestable black boy hitching ring in front of their houses, and no matter how often it was mysteriously broken or removed, they would always replace it.

But one of the most sickening reminders of Blacks' status as a group in this country which was referred to by the May 4, 1900 *P.I.* as "one of the favorite amusements of many early evening Seattle strollers" was a phonograph record of the suffering of a southern black man being burned at the stake. The recording, apparently made at the scene of the ghastly undertaking, was narrated by the owner who described the poor wretch's "crime, capture and punishment" as he invited the crowd to listen to the recording of the moans and cries of the victim.<sup>12</sup>

I know of no incident of mob violence against Blacks in Seattle. There was, however, a report of a contemplation of lynching a black man accused of attempted rape of a white woman in Renton in 1891. The suspect was never found and the furor soon died down. Ironically, black miners at Newcastle, many of southern origin, threatened to lynch one of their fellow miners who was accused of the rape of a little girl in 1892. After a reminder by the mining superintendent of the frequency of such actions against their black brothers in the South, they terminated their plans.

A few black people were willing participants in their own contemptible treatment. One of the popular diversions at Madison Park in 1895 for strong-armed men was taking three throws for five cents at the head of a man called "Smoke." In 1900 two little black children were used to advertise soap and the drug store in whose window they sat blowing bubbles. Although the youngsters were probably cute and charming, this was in an era when soap ads often used references to "darkies" being made five shades lighter, or when naked black children with enormous eyes and bright red lips decorated packages of household items. Such caricatures were never funny to black people.

And there were instances of "Tomming."<sup>13</sup> One of the most blatant examples is an ingratiating letter written to the *P.I.* and published May 14, 1899 denouncing the *Republican's* attack against the Fraternal Order of Eagles, an all-white order. In part, the letter states that the article does not "express the sentiment of the 'colored' citizens of this city, and originated in the mind of the editor of the above named sheet who is not known by very many of the 'colored' people in this city. Further we wish to say that we consider the order one of the best in the country and would like to have a 'colored' lodge organized in this city."

## REACTIONS TO PROVOCATION

In his autobiography Horace Cayton, Jr. describes a painful episode in which the Cayton family spends an anxious and fearful afternoon in the basement of their Capitol Hill home awaiting retribution after their father hit a white man downtown. Perhaps that was a natural reaction for two adults who had reached maturity in Mississippi during the violent and tumultuous years following the Civil War, but such action does not appear to be typical of the 19th century population, many of whom were quite expressive in conflict with white people.

Although deplored by newspaper editors, and others who preached civic pride, black people often used violence to settle their disputes with white people. It was on such occasions that the differences between whites in other parts of the country and those in Seattle was most apparent. However much talk there was about this being a "white man's country," and there was some, there was a sense of fair play in operation here regarding Aframericans which was lacking in most of 19th century America. (Unfortunately, it did not extend to the Chinese who were cruelly subjected to mob violence in Seattle in 1886.) Sometimes the combatants were arrested, but at other times they both walked away, after wallowing in the muddy streets, the muck and mud clinging to their clothes and hair, unapprehended. From such reported incidents in newspapers a ring of onlookers was normally attracted but the fighters remained unaided.

The participants were generally men who were not well known in the community, but there were exceptions. When a white man in Joseph Bennett's apartment building refused to allow his child to play with Bennett's son, a fight ensued in which the white man was cut. Mr. Bennett was a staunch member of various progressive organizations in the black community.

Shoemaker George Mallory threw a white man out of his Jackson Street shop and beat him up on the sidewalk when the man angered him. Both were taken to the police station following the incident.

Allen Hughes defended his fighting with some white men a little past midnight on a Sunday as his reaction to an "insult to a married couple waiting for the last [street] car." He was infuriated when the men passed and called out to his wife, "Ah, there, sweetheart."

In 1867 Archy Fox's lady friend left him and moved in with a well-known elderly white settler. At first Fox entertained the idea of throwing acid on her, but was talked out of it by one of his customers. Several days later, in the evening, he threw it on her paramour instead. For some days, Fox went through his usual routine of barbering and furnishing baths to townspeople while the whole town discussed the attack

and the victim spoke freely of the identity of his attacker. Finally, the newspaper called on authorities to do something in the interest of justice. Fox was brought to trial and sentenced to three months in the territorial jail at Steilacoom and a \$200 fine, plus court costs. Prior to this action he had borne a faultless reputation in Seattle and Victoria as some of the prominent members of the community testified, and it was "with regret" that the *Weekly Intelligencer* "published the trial and conviction of a man who allowed his passion to overcome his reason."<sup>14</sup> After his release Mr. Fox returned to Seattle, later expanded his business, and bought and sold real estate to his advantage.

Professional Aframericans tended to avoid violent resolutions to insults and provocations, choosing instead to publicly embarrass the offender by exposure through the newspapers, or denunciations in community meetings, or both. When the son of a state senator roughly pushed Attorney J. E. Hawkins to one side of the sidewalk, exclaiming, "Get out of the way, nigger, let a white man pass," Hawkins, articulating the indignation he and other members of the black community felt over the incident, spoke to a *P.I.* reporter: "The colored people of Seattle furnished material aid in electing a Republican legislature that in turn elected Senator Foster, and they will not forget the slur that was publicly thrust in their face by his son, whether sober or drunk."<sup>15</sup>



This 1882 drawing shows William Grose, known in early territorial days as "Big Bill the Cook". It also shows members of other racial groups in Seattle at the time.



## BLACKS' VIEW OF OTHER NONWHITES

Aframerican attitudes toward other nonwhite people appear to have ranged from wanton disregard to solicitous and sympathetic. There was one case of assault on an Indian by an Aframerican in 1864 and again in the 1870s. The first instance resulted in death, and there was a report of an assault on a Chinese man by a hotel waiter in 1890.

On the other hand a seventeen year old bootblack was arrested after trying to be accommodating by buying whiskey for Indians in 1891, a violation of federal law. In the early days of settlement some of the men had living arrangements with Indian women. Mattie Harris recalls the formation of her attitude towards Indian people and her mother's example with regard to those people who passed through on their way to the hop fields in the late summer around the turn of the century. Indians sometimes knocked on the door of their house overlooking Elliott Bay:

*We lived near the beach over the sand dunes. They came around the bend from around where the boats go out to the ocean, in the evening about 4:00 o'clock. They'd come [in] great big canoes. They paddled . . . so many on one side, and so many on the other, incredibly fast. In no time they'd be on dry land, and they'd build their bonfires [to] cook their clams. They evidently lived mostly on fish, but they'd borrow, especially onions, potatoes, bread . . . And my mother always — whenever the Indians came for anything — she gave it to them. She said they need it. Everybody has always realized that the Indians weren't treated right. They had a hard time, a very hard time. They still have.<sup>16</sup>*

It would be interesting to know what William Grose thought and felt as he watched the Chinese file past his restaurant and lodging house from ships and into the town, their belongings suspended from bamboo poles across their shoulders, as the town wondered aloud during the 1870s, "Whatever is to be done with so many Chinamen?"<sup>17</sup>

William Hedges capitalized on the Chinese need for arable land in 1871 by granting a three year lease on his four-acre Broadway plot to two of them. Under the terms of the agreement the Chinese would clear the land, enclose it with a "substantial rail fence," and plant twenty fruit trees furnished by Hedges. They were also granted permission to build a house valued at \$50 or less on the land for which Hedges would pay them upon expiration of the lease. Should they continue cultivation of the land beyond that period they were to pay Hedges \$50.<sup>18</sup>

Although he spoke out earlier in favor of a protective immigration policy in some of his speeches, Mr. Cayton was to say in the March 30, 1900 edition of the *Republican*:

*In as much as Chinamen [sic] have been permitted to come to this country we believe they have a God-given right to make an honest living, wherever they so desire, and when the white citizens of any community band themselves to prevent them from tilling the soil, and thereby make that honest living, and that too, when vacant lands are as plentiful as they are in this state, then it occurs to us that those white citizens are but opening the way to those Chinamen to either become thieves or public "charges" on the community. The lands of this section are not being developed very rapidly by the Americans, and if the Chinamen will develop them, they are deserving of much personal praise instead of personal abuse and violent intimidations for so doing. Any man, woman or child permitted to land on American soil should be protected both in the spirit and the letter of the law, and the ones first and foremost to seeing that such is done should be the native white men, who claim to stand for all that's good in the shape of freedom of mankind.*

Cayton also derided "labor growlers" for their negative comments against the mayor for having ridden in a carriage with a Japanese government official in 1900.

### A NEW PEOPLE

However Aframericans were viewed here, they had their own self-definition and a fragile sense of nationalism. The tendency to try to keep them in their "place" or to define them was largely unacceptable although there was no massive public resistance to it. They simply ignored the attempt in various ways. Manuel Lopes's inimitable procession was the first of many instances. Robert Dixon, after reevaluating the town's chances for survival in 1876, subscribed for \$100 worth of shares for the building of the first 15 miles of the Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad and Transportation Company.<sup>19</sup> John F. Cragwell was a member of a white rowing crew in the mid-90s. In 1900 his photographs of Nome were published in the *P.I.*<sup>20</sup> Throughout the 1890s they sought "white men's work," those jobs requiring a decent suit of clothes, and in which they would not have to break their backs toiling in all kinds of weather.

After Emancipation Blacks were new men, both legally and by their own determination, and importantly, citizens of the United States. Basic civil rights and the franchise were guaranteed by the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. They could come and go as they



chose, and the money they earned was theirs to keep. Exclusion from privileges and services enjoyed by all citizens was made unconstitutional.<sup>21</sup>

Just when Blacks started to vote in Seattle is not known, although it was within a decade of the passage of the 15th Amendment since several of the residents could read in 1880 as opposed to most of those here in the 1860s.

Citizenship guarantees were further reinforced by the passage of the 1875 Federal Civil Rights Acts which forbade discrimination in such public places as theaters, restaurants, hotels and railroad cars. Their right to sit on juries was also guaranteed by the act. The repeal of this act in 1885 seems to have had little effect on Seattle's black citizens. The 1883 Territorial Suffrage Act which forbade discrimination on the basis of religion or sex gave women the ballot for the first time in Washington, and within a year they were serving on juries. Rosanna Freeman and her daughter Harriet Anne were among those taking advantage of the newly earned right to vote.

Black men testified in court as early as 1867, and perhaps earlier, although it is less certain whether they testified in cases involving whites. In later years women and men testified in such cases. Mrs. Alzada Collins testified in a white divorce case in 1894. By 1892 they were members of juries in cases which involved both black and white defendants. This exercise of citizenship was undertaken with a great deal of earnestness and pride. In 1892 T. C. Collins served as jury foreman in a murder trial involving a Franklin miner as defendant. After several unsuccessful attempts to reach a unanimous verdict in the case, one of the white jurors, in stating that Mr. Collins was "stubborn," was told by Collins: "I did not come here to be led or taught. I came to do my duty."<sup>21</sup> Jury duty was considered a reaffirmation of the rights and privileges of citizenship, and mention is made in the *Republican* through 1901 of persons serving as jurors.

## THE VICTORIANS AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Aframericans have not been properly credited for their role in constantly pushing this country towards a realization of its constitutional guarantees of individual rights and justice. But in Washington State, as elsewhere, they diligently pursued equal treatment, which was ultimately to benefit other segments of the society. They were in posts of little or no prestige, and demeaned by salary differentials during the Legislative session of 1889.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, their determination was strong and through their stated sentiments concerning their gifts of loyalty to the Union in the Civil War, and their unwavering support of the Republican Party, summed up in a speech read on the Senate floor,

# **The Seattle Republican**

Established May, 1894.

OFFICE 714 THIRD AVENUE.

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**H. R. Cayton.....Editor**

**Susie Revels Cayton.....Associate**

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## **SUBSCRIPTION RATES.**

**One Year .....\$2.00**

**Six Months ..... 1.00**

**Three Months ..... 60**

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**Bona Fide Circulation .....2,500**

**Only Paper in the Northwest Successfully Edited by a Negro.**

**A Whole Page of Legal Notices.**

**Always Regular, Readable, Reliable, Republican.**

**Advertising Rates Furnished upon Application.**

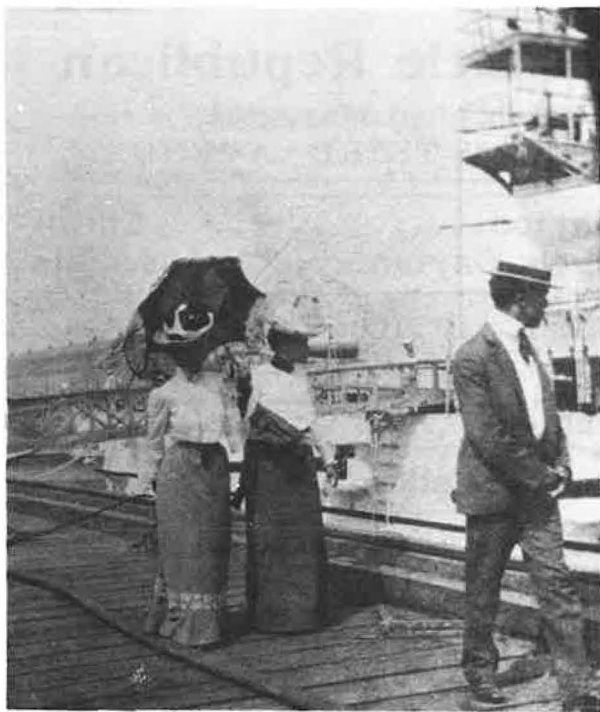
**It Carries No Saloon Advertisements.**

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**Entered at the Postoffice at Seattle as  
Second-class Mail Matter.**

*The Seattle Republican* lasted from 1894 to 1915.

their contacts and their lobbying skills, they were able to shepherd through a Public Accommodations Act which went into effect upon the adoption of the Washington State Constitution in 1890.<sup>23</sup> Owen Bush, son of the Tumwater pioneer, George Bush, who was a duly elected representative from Thurston County, is sometimes given major credit for passage of this bill, but Cayton gives credit to John Conna, a former King County homesteader, for both the framing and lobbying of the bill.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Conna served as Senate Assistant Sergeant at Arms of the



A Sunday promenade on the waterfront about 1900.

1889 session, and later as Sergeant at Arms of the regular session of the Senate during 1890.

This first public accommodations law entitled **CIVIL AND LEGAL RIGHTS: An Act to Protect All Citizens in Their Civil and Legal Rights** included provisions for equal enjoyment of the accommodations of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters and other places of public amusement and restaurants. Persons denying accommodations to an individual on the basis of "race, color, or nationality" were guilty of a misdemeanor which carried a fine of from \$50 to \$300 or imprisonment for from one to six months upon conviction.

The 1895 Legislature amended this law by retaining the "equal enjoyment" provisions, adding "eating houses" and barber shops to the list of accommodations. The penalty clause was completely omitted, thus emasculating the provision. From this point on the uncertainty of public accommodations represented one of the most serious challenges to Aframericans in Washington State.

It was impossible to document problems that the earliest residents might have encountered in seeking public accommodations. When the Original Georgia Minstrels came to town in September of 1876 they stayed at the Occidental Hotel, one of the largest hotels of the day. A local jeweler entertained them at his shop with wine and cigars after an evening's performance. This was the year following the enactment of the federal Civil Rights Act, but its passage had hardly elicited comment in the territory. Given the remoteness from areas of tense racial relations and the very small black population, it is likely that they would have been lodged at the hotel anyway. The record reveals no incident of a person being turned away from a hotel during the territorial period because of race. Indians and Chinese were even more despised than Blacks in this era, but men of means of these races, such as labor contractors or merchants, were registered at Seattle's best hotels from time to time.

## CHAPTER XCIX.

[H. B. No. 374.]

### CIVIL AND LEGAL RIGHTS TO BE ENJOYED BY ALL PERSONS.

AN ACT to amend section 2959 of volume 1 of Hill's Annotated Statutes and Codes of Washington:

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:*

[SECTION 1.] That section 2959 of volume 1 of Hill's Annotated Statutes and Codes of Washington is hereby amended to read as follows: Section 2959. All persons within the jurisdiction of the State of Washington shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the public accommodations and advantages, facilities and privileges of inns, restaurants, eating houses, barber shops, public conveyances on land or water, theaters and other places of public accommodation and amusement, subject only to the condition and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all citizens.

Passed the house March 12, 1895.

Passed the senate March 14, 1895.

Approved March 20, 1895.

The effectiveness of the Public Accommodations Law was diminished by the 1895 amendment.

While some people may have encountered discrimination earlier, newspaper reports surfaced by 1892 featuring sporadic incidents based on denial of service to Blacks. The first such instance was the arrest of two sporting class women who reacted angrily to a bartender's telling them, "I don't wait on niggers." Their resistance to his attempt to eject them resulted in one's broken parasol and a badly scratched face for the other. They were arrested following the melee when they threw rocks and broke the window of the saloon.

Seven years later a man was to break a heavy beer glass over the head of a bartender who drew the color line on him. At this particular saloon black men could buy drinks at the bar, but they were refused the free lunch which was usually given to other customers. The black man testified in court that he had bought liquor several times at the saloon and was surprised and angered at being refused the lunch on the basis of his color. The proprietor was fined one dollar after he was reprimanded by the judge.

Another case of violation of a person's civil rights also grew out of a saloon problem. This case excited a great deal of interest among the black population as it was based on a practice which had become increasingly prevalent over the closing years of the century. Rather than issue a flat denial, proprietors of various establishments sought to exclude Aframericans by charging them exorbitant prices for their purchases. In January of 1901 John H. Randolph and a friend ordered drinks of whiskey in a plush Pioneer Building saloon. Randolph paid for these drinks with a \$5 gold piece. When he counted his change he had been charged fifty cents for drinks that normally sold for 12½ cents apiece. Upon protesting to the bartender over the injustice of the charges he was told that niggers were not wanted in the place and drinks were served to them at fifty cents per drink. In the suit Mr. Randolph brought against the proprietors he stated that the bartender explained the policy to him in loud, jeering tones which were intended to embarrass him because of his race. He asked for \$5000 damages for "distress of mind" caused by the insult and violation of his rights under the constitutional provision which granted him equal privilege under the law. The court proceedings were closely watched by restaurant proprietors and other saloon operators, too. The loss of Randolph's case was one of several which ultimately upheld the practice of proprietors' discriminating against people of color.

Operators of restaurants were the chief offenders. Hotels continued the accommodation of nonwhite people throughout the period, but in many instances, their restaurants would not serve such persons.

Restaurant discrimination cases were no longer a novelty in 1898. In fact, at least one such suit was heard during each court term from that time onward. As had saloon keepers, restaurateurs watched the pro-

ceedings as they continued the deliberate violation of the rights of black people. The summer of that year, two cases in particular created a great deal of emotion and a spate of letters to newspapers. In a case heard in June by a Justice of the Peace, a long-remembered decision was rendered that a restaurateur could not be compelled to serve a black person. The justice stated further that the decision also applied to theaters, skating rinks, and merry-go-rounds. The decision was based on the position that under common law, inns and transportation facilities were quasi-public — thus they should be open to all citizens who could afford them. He interpreted common law and state law as holding theaters, skating rinks, restaurants and merry-go-rounds as recreation, and that operators of such private businesses had a right to choose their customers as they wished, in the absence of a specific law prohibiting such action by persons in these businesses. Although the ruling was against the state, and also raised the issue of the propriety of a justice of the peace making decision as to the constitutionality of a state law, the record reveals no further action by the state.

In July of 1898 a similar case, this time brought as a civil suit before another justice, resulted in a decision which upheld the civil rights law as amended. The jury in the case awarded a judgment of \$1 and costs to a man represented by J. Edward Hawkins. When asked about the small amount of the judgment, the attorney is quoted as saying, "It's the principle, not the damages that we are after."<sup>25</sup>

The refusal of two restaurants to serve Professor H.Y. Hwang, a visitor from China in 1900, was embarrassing enough to cause an expression of indignation from the Seattle Ministerial Association.<sup>26</sup> It had never objected as Blacks were gradually deprived of their constitutional rights, and local Chinese were denied almost all basic rights, and threatened with expulsion as well.

Time and again suits were brought, usually with Ed Hawkins as attorney for the plaintiffs who were excluded from concert halls, bath houses, barber shops, restaurants, and saloons. Con Rideout also served as counsel in some of these cases.

Just what were private, quasi-public, and public accommodations, and whether or not some were subject to the law, while others were not, was not satisfactorily resolved during the Victorian period. This indecisive law, left in its amended state, and subject to various interpretations, was to be the subject of further suits during the first half of the 20th century.

Seattle was one of the best places for black people in the country during the Victorian Era, and yet there was a streak of intolerance evident here which was not atypical of other places at the time. Aframericans were by no means the only groups having problems in the city in the latter part of the period. Not only were people speaking against Chinese

## MINISTERS ARE INDIGNANT.

### Condemn Two Seattle Restaurants for Refusing to Serve Prof.

Hwang.

The Seattle Ministerial Association at its regular meeting yesterday morning passed resolutions condemning the action of two Seattle restaurants in refusing to serve Prof. H. Y. Hwang, the distinguished Chinese scholar who was recently in the city, with meals because of his nationality.

The committee appointed to investigate the matter, reported that the Stevens and Delmonico restaurants had refused to receive Prof. Hwang, the latter on the ground that it did not "feed Chinamen, Japs or niggers." The following resolutions were then read before the association and adopted:

"Whereas, We have heard with mixed feelings of surprise, pain and indignation that in this cosmopolitan city of Seattle, a Christian, a man of education and refinement, a distinguished representative of a great and historic country, has been refused the usual attention accorded

Blacks were not the only people who experienced discrimination in Seattle.

laborers, but others felt they should not bury their dead in established graveyards due to their "heathenish practices."<sup>27</sup>

For most of the Chinese here a long battle was fought against exclusion from the country, and some of those who were found on incoming boats were not permitted to land here. After the more brutal and public attempt at forcible expulsion in 1886, there were also reports of American-born Chinese being expelled, and despite the Fifteenth Amendment they were not permitted to vote until 1900, and then only two individuals were granted that right.

In the late summer of 1901 the city launched an expulsion campaign against Gypsies. That same year a young Japanese boy was waylaid at South School at the foot of Beacon Hill, and brutally beaten after about twenty white boys chased him three blocks before one of them clubbed him to the ground. The boys were reported as being angry because the youth was placed in their classroom.<sup>28</sup>

From the earliest times Aframericans were buried in graveyards with whites. The oldest record of purchase of a cemetery plot by an Aframerican is that of William Hedges who bought a lot for \$15 in 1870 in the old Seattle Cemetery.<sup>29</sup> Only in the 1940s was the burial of a



black person in a largely white cemetery an issue. The grumbling against the Chinese eventually died down as one can see by the presence of a substantial Chinese section at Lake View today.

Blacks were not buried in any one section. At Lake View pioneers are buried near each other without regard to race. Black funeral processions were sometimes noted by the newspapers, depending on their size and the prominence of the deceased. Undertakers were strictly egalitarian, numbering among their clients Aframericans and Chinese. The funerals of some Blacks were held at Bonney and Stewart's chapel. Schools, hospitals, and jails were always integrated as were county or state facilities for the indigent or insane. Again, Chinese and Indians were the exceptions. They were confined in the southwest corner of the county jail.<sup>30</sup>

Even after the passage of the state Public Accommodations Law, Indians en route to and from the hop fields rode boxcars. This was usually part of the contract agreement. There was much consternation of white passengers when a large number of Indians entered the passenger cars upon returning from the hop fields one day in September of 1890. However, a well-dressed, well-heeled Indian probably experienced no more trouble in passenger cars than in major hotels.

Black Seattleites lived similarly to their white neighbors. Everybody, except a very few, was poor by today's standards. Blacks differed from their neighbors mainly in the prejudice they had to face because of their race. Despite their small numbers, they had an effect beyond their numerical representation in the population. Here, as nationally, they pressed the majority on the realization of the meaning of the Constitution. Police brutality, then as now, was an issue to some members of the community, and a black man brought a charge of unnecessary force against a policeman in 1893. Corruption in politics was a charge frequently heard in the latter 19th and early 20th century. Two men were to bring attention to the matter, first in 1889, and then in 1901.

In the closing years of the century, the black community here was no longer "good copy." Reports of its activities center largely on reports of theft or violence. Due to popular prejudice, reinforced by yellow journalism, the black man in Seattle ultimately became stereotyped as having a predilection for crime. Although most men and teenaged boys carried knives during the Victorian Era, it was the black man who became the "crazed demon" with a knife when he was the assailant. Hardly any reports held strictly to the facts of such a case when a black person was involved. On the other hand, when a former Mayor of Anacortes stabbed a white newspaperman in April of 1894, the report was carefully worded and completely lacking in inflammatory or elaborate descriptions of the incident.



Most people did not have luxuries, but they enjoyed what was considered a comfortable life at the time. The growing number of black home owners in the Madison district in the early 1890s gave testimony to their industry and thrift, as did their real estate acquisitions throughout the Victorian period.

We know about the achievements of those people who acquired homes and lived quiet respectable lives, but a few were utterly disappointed upon their arrival. In one of the few suicides occurring during the period, a pathetic little note reflects the despair of a man whose hopes were unfulfilled. The death of this man, recently arrived, was caused by an overdose of morphine. His terse little farewell simply stated: "Just as I expected — no money and no friends. Goodbye to all."<sup>31</sup> Most people were in less desperate circumstances and were able to make a living although it was sometimes not a very good one.

What Aframericans expected and what they actually found once they got here were two different things. Seattle was not exactly the Promised Land although it was a considerable improvement over most places in the United States during the Victorian period.

## 2 Men's Work

*Early in the history of Seattle there  
wasn't an awful lot of prejudice; but  
there wasn't an awful lot of  
opportunities either. When the job  
competition becomes acute, then you  
notice the difference in the way the  
Negro is treated.*

Mattie Vinyerd Harris  
November 8, 1979

When interviewing about 100 Aframerican citizens of Seattle, many of them children of the Victorians, the most frequently mentioned area of discrimination was jobs. Over and over I heard, "You couldn't do anything outside of menial labor." The citizens of late 19th century Seattle saw themselves increasingly restricted to low paying jobs in a limited number of occupations. Like many other citizens of the time, they worked from ten to twelve hours, six days a week for about \$1.50 a day.

Most men worked at whatever jobs they could find. Some were employed as common laborers, while others knocked on back doors seeking a day's work cutting wood, cleaning carpets, whitewashing fences or performing general household chores. Some found menial jobs in office buildings, saloons, and stores as porters and janitors. There were coachmen, hostlers and trainers, painters, peddlers, teamsters, chimney sweeps and valets. But they were limited to those jobs which had no mobility.

From their earliest days, Puget Sound mills at Port Gamble and Port Madison had a cosmopolitan work force which included Aframericans and men from Chile, Peru, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), and the Aframericans found work in such Seattle mills as Stimson and Company and David Denny's mill at Lake Union. A few also worked in logging

operations along the Sound and in what is now Seattle. Rarely exceeding one or two black men per crew, there were still probably more men involved in such work a hundred years ago around the state than there are now. Many had sawmill experience elsewhere and there were far more sawmills in the Seattle area in the 19th century than there are now. In 1900 there were 40 mills in Seattle.

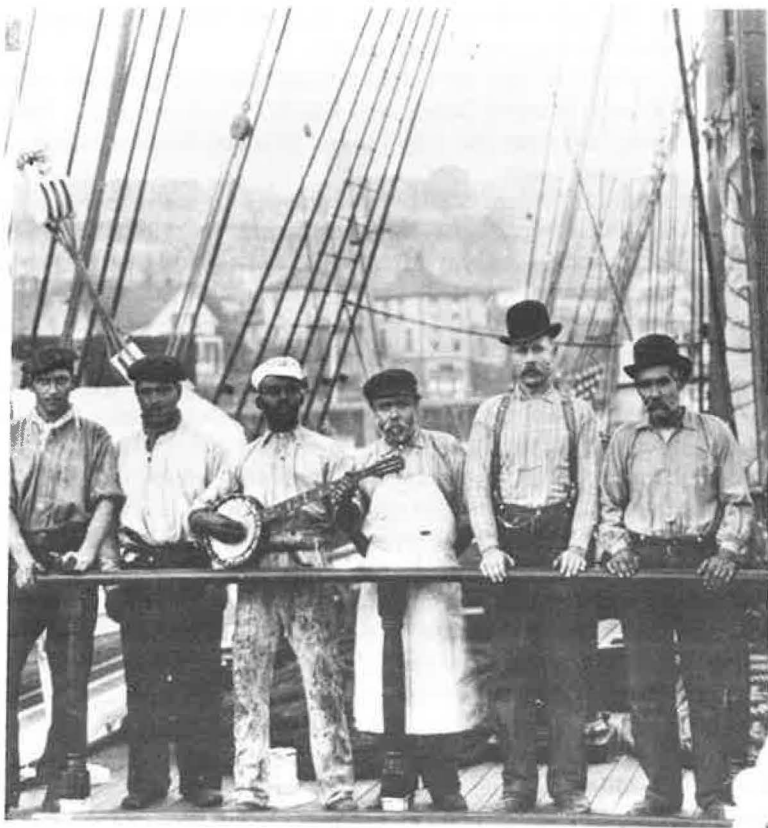
The pay varied from job to job, but wages were quite low, so low that a casual laborer would have found difficulty supporting a family on his wages alone. From the names that are mentioned in various accounts, most of that laboring class appears to have been single men. Commenting on the large number of unemployed men in town, partly because of the Yukon gold rush, a letter in the *Seattle Times* of February 8, 1898, signed "A Poor Man's Friend," gives some indication of the cost of living at that time. The writer states that rents had increased to \$1.50 a week, shaving from ten cents to fifteen cents, meal tickets were \$3.00, and laundry was thirty-five cents a week. At that time most laborers were earning less than \$2.00 a day.

One of the most trying aspects of life in the last half of the 19th century was the occurrence of periodic economic depressions beginning in the late 1860s. Common laborers, servants and small businessmen were exceedingly vulnerable to layoffs or closures. As most of the black population depended on work in these categories, their lives were generally hard.

Prior to the 1890s the black population was exceedingly small and grew slowly. According to federal census data, it grew from one, Manuel Lopes, in 1860 to 22 in 1880. So few were they that hardly anyone viewed them as an economic threat. The ads for "white only" help, or "we hire only white help" announcements of the 1880s were catering primarily to anti-Chinese prejudice. Aframericans were so few in number that they did not attract the attention and consequent violence suffered by the Chinese.

Still there were some disagreeable signs that they were viewed as a potential menace. The same newspapers that carried ads for A. P. Freeman's shoe shop also carried ads, sometimes on the same page, which stated that their boots and shoes were made by white labor. The implication was unmistakable since Freeman was the only nonwhite boot-maker in town. There was an active White Cooks and Waiters' Union, and others which restricted their membership to whites. Blacks and other nonwhites were used sometimes to replace larger numbers of white workers. And a white barber at Ballard thought it necessary to advertise his race in seeking a position through the *Seattle Times* in October of 1895.

By 1870 census reports list black men as stewards on boat, although a few were in such capacities prior to that time. Black workers in the



Some men on ships did the same work as white crew members.

culinary and service departments on boats continued throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. Not much is known about actual working conditions prior to organization of workers, but the employment was attractive enough to a black man and his wife that they sought a steward and stewardess position on a ship in 1895.

A few men listed as "sailor" in various sources performed general chores around the ships and some worked in skilled capacities. Most of these, however, were not local residents of long term. Seattleites of the mid-twentieth century were amazed to meet easterners who worked in the engine rooms of ships during the 1940s. Such work had been closed to local black men from the early 1900s. Some of Wilhelm Hester's photographs of turn of the century boat workers show black men dressed in the same fashion as other boat workers, indicating that they did the same kind of work as white crew members. Others show more

clearly the distinction in occupations as when a black man in a group portrait poses wearing a white apron.

A few left ships, and settled in Seattle, picking up work where it could be found. Manuel Lopes was the first to leave a ship and stay here, followed over the years by others. William Grose also left his job as steward to settle here.

From scattered indications, a deduction can be made that life aboard some vessels was hard and sometimes brutal. In 1884 a steward was arrested for deserting his ship after he caused a disturbance in resisting efforts to get him to return. During the course of probate of William Black's estate in 1889, it was revealed that he had been a sailor under his true name, Charles H. Cassen. He had been part of a crew that deserted at San Francisco after cruel treatment by the ship's officers. After signing on another ship he came to the Puget Sound under the assumed name, William Black.

Several suits were brought over the period in which sailors reported abuse and mistreatment aboard ships. These causes, ranging from being tied up by the neck to being beaten, were the bases of suits filed in Seattle that involved black men from England and Chile in the 1890s. In 1900 the *Republican* reports desertion of several young men from a schooner because of intolerable conditions aboard the vessel. And shanghaiing was a concern of the Sailor's Union as late as 1895.<sup>2</sup>

A few men lived and worked as fishermen on boats with racially mixed crews throughout the period. Five men are listed as fishermen in the 1900 census. One of them, William Ferguson, owned the tugboat *Burton* on which he, his brother, and another black man worked. Dexter Hunt of Everett owned a schooner, and was one of the few Afamericans owning large boats on the Pacific Coast in the 1890s.

## THE SERVICE TRADES

Hotels employed black men as porters, waiters, and stewards from territorial days. And here and there one could see a black hotel runner on the ocean docks, but this occupation was circumscribed by city ordinance in the mid-eighties because of the vigor with which most of the agents sought to entice the visitor to patronize the hotel of his employ. In 1890 the ordinance was amended, allowing licensed persons to pursue the occupation.

By 1900 enthusiasm for attracting railroad customers to hotels equalled that of the 1880s for boat travellers and an ordinance was passed prohibiting hotel runners and hack drivers from congregating around passenger trains. Such runners were also required to purchase licenses. A few black men, perhaps on an irregular basis, acted as runners, and were sometimes arrested for lack of a permit.

In October of 1889 one of Seattle's most elegant hotels, the Rainier Grand, opened on the corner of Fifth and Columbia. On the eleventh of October, about 40 servants arrived via steamship from Vancouver, British Columbia. They had travelled from Chicago to St. Paul, then to Winnipeg, and finally to Vancouver by Canadian Pacific Railway. The retinue included dining room attendants, chambermaids, laundry women, cooks, bellboys, and elevator operators. They were quartered on the second floor of the hotel. During the years of the hotel's operation, local residents continued to find employment there, although the original crew of waiters left the Rainier in 1891 to work in the Hotel Northern dining room, which was opened by their sponsor from Chicago.

Seattle's earliest black pioneers were cooks. Except for Lopes and a few others, they worked for others, sometimes followed by establishment of their own restaurants. Included in this group were William Grose and James Orr.



William Grose, a pioneer landowner in the East Madison district.

Standing six feet, four inches tall and weighing more than 400 pounds, Mr. Grose was known around the Sound as "Big Bill the Cook," dating from the days he kept a lunch counter in Rube Low's

### **Porters for Day Coaches.**

The Great Northern railway, it is announced by local officials, will soon place on each of its day coaches a colored attendant, whose duty it will be to attend to the wants of passengers, as is done in sleeping cars. The plan has been tried on the Eastern divisions of the road as far west as Havre, Mont., and found to work successfully.

This 1900 announcement indicates an increase in railroad employment.

saloon. Mr. Orr came to Seattle in 1883 after working as steward of the Palace Hotel dining room in San Francisco. His first work in Seattle was as dining room steward at the Arlington Hotel where his gracious and competent manner was commended in the December 23, 1883 issue of the *Seattle Sunday Star*. After four and a half years at the Arlington, he worked two and a half years at the Occidental Hotel. In August of 1890, he began operation of the Arlington Hotel restaurant. Several other people invested meager savings in small restaurants or lunch counters with periods of business ranging from a few weeks to several years.

John Randolph worked at various places after his arrival here in 1880. For years he was the handyman at Yesler's Hall, which was the only real theater in town during much of the territorial period. His duties included janitor, doorkeeper, usher and bill poster.<sup>3</sup> Later he cooked at the Palace restaurant. He is listed in the 1889 city directory as cook, but the Bradstreet Dun agency lists him as sustaining a \$4000 restaurant loss in the Seattle Fire.<sup>4</sup>

Some present day families are here because of their father's employment with the railroads during the latter half of the 19th century. Many men came to Puget Sound as railroad employees, principally porters and waiters. Liking what they saw in the growing city, some returned to the East, and moved their families to Seattle. Out of their ranks came some of the staunchest members of the African Methodist Church, such as Charles and Eva Harvey and Walter and Olivia Washington. Although both of these men worked at a variety of jobs in Seattle, others who moved here continued work for the railroads throughout the period. The number of railway company employees was increased in 1900 by Great Northern's decision to use black day coach attendants on their cars. While railroad employment was not as extensive as that on boats, it continued to be a steady source of income for some of the members of the black community through the 1950s.



## BLACK AND LABOR UNIONS

Skilled workmen came to Seattle throughout the period. They included boilermakers, butchers, coopers, carpenters, and machinists. All too often they were unable to find employment for their skills, ending up as janitors, waiters or laborers, working now and then in their areas of training. As the 19th century grew to a close, exclusion by labor unions and discriminating employers became more pronounced.

When James Blocker came to Seattle in 1878, union restrictions were so strong that he was unable to find employment as a butcher. After working as a janitor for about ten years, he opened an employment agency in 1888, and the next year began his own butcher shop at 14th and Madison.

Grant Penwright is the only man known to have been hired in the meat-cutting industry, but there may have been others. He worked for a packinghouse on the north side of Beacon Hill in 1892 and died a tragic death. Walking along slippery boards while scalding hogs, he lost his balance one day and fell in a boiling vat, which resulted in a painful death some hours later.

A very small number worked in plumbing. William M. Jackson began as a pipefitter about 1897. Despite his exclusion from the union, he commanded the prevailing wage and was able to find work with an established firm. By 1901 he opened his own plumbing business.

The most obvious exception to union exclusion of Blacks was the Journeyman Stonecutters of America. The stated policy of the National union was open membership, and the Seattle local admitted black men from the time of its organization in 1889. The Aframerican membership numbered less than ten during the nineties, but it was through their work as union members that Lloyd Ray and James S. Murray worked on some of the more important buildings constructed in the early years of that decade. Among these were the Burke Building, which occupied the site of the new Federal Building, and the Sullivan Building, which formerly stood on First Avenue South, as well as the old Post Office in Port Townsend, and several buildings in Portland.

Mr. Ray, in his wife's book, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*, provides a glimpse of a little known aspect of the rebuilding of the city in 1889. "The city was burned down in ashes and I came to help build it up, as I was a stone mason and cutter by trade. It was first built up of tents, and saloons were at every door. Beer by the water buckets was on the job from morning until night." After work and in between jobs, this fraternity drank at Billy-the-Mug's Saloon where beer was five cents a mug.

While there was some pride in all-black staffs in hotels, dining



a good picker to earn \$2 to \$3 a day, thus earning at least as much as a \$50 monthly janitorial salary. Aframericans entered this work about the middle of the nineties. Throughout most of the territorial period the industry depended almost wholly on Native American labor.

Others ranged farther afield. The gold rushes enticed black men from Seattle to seek their fortunes, and a change in their status in society. Although most were disappointed, a few earned enough to return and start a new life. After disappointment in the Nome area in 1900, George Grose travelled the Mountain states selling breakfast cereal during 1901. I. I. Walker operated a hotel following his return from Dawson, Yukon in 1907. He also bought a 20-acre tract in Kirkland which he used as a truck farm.

A few were in exceptional positions from the early years of statehood. Soon after his arrival in 1881, Horace Cayton began work on a short-lived Populist newspaper. His next job was as political reporter for the *P.I.*<sup>8</sup> In his 1896 Special Edition of the *Republican* he mentions the present employment by the *P.I.* of an office boy and a janitor. Some years later he reports a young man who did not finish training for stereotyper by the *P.I.*

Frank Abrams, who worked as a machinist during his early days here, was employed as a clerk for a small white firm in the late nineties and later worked as a clerk for another company after the turn of the century.

### BOOTBLACKING

In the mining country of the early nineties, young men of African and Italian extraction made war on their brothers. In Seattle they occasionally fought each other. Relations between the two groups took on a much more hostile tone by the turn of the century as increasing numbers of Italians moved into more of the occupations traditionally called "nigger jobs."

Bootblacking was an occupation that almost any person could do. It required little skill and a modest investment, and many newcomers readily entered the work. In time, some of the Aframericans, and several of the Italians, came to own attractive, well-stocked marble and nickel stands located in choice areas such as entrances to the large hotels, new office buildings, and the more popular saloons. In 1901 such spaces could cost as much as \$50 a month for rental to an individual, and between \$1000 and \$2000 annually to companies which some Italians had formed in the late nineties. The less affluent Aframericans often found side-street and alleyway locations which they occupied for many years without interference.

John L. Gibson was arrested during the "bootblacks' war." He later bought property near the Mercer Island floating bridge.



Until 1892 peddlers and vendors of hot corn, eggs, candy and popcorn operated their businesses along the downtown streets or at some popular street corner without regulations to the contrary. In October of that year, a city ordinance was passed which forced such enterprises out of business, or required them to obtain permission to stand on private steps or in doorways.

As the century came to an end heightened competition between the bootblacks led to a virtual state of war. In April of 1899 several Italians presented a petition to the Board of Public Works which charged that certain Aframerican bootblacks were obstructing the alleyways and streets they occupied with their stands. The Italians asked that the stands be removed.

The Board responded to the request by issuing a broad order that the streets and alleys must be cleared of bootblack stands, as well as fruit stands, candy stands, and trucks and express wagons left in streets and alleys at night. The city ordinance which the Board of Public Works acted upon, allowed merchants to display goods on the sidewalk occupying no more than 30 inches of space.<sup>9</sup> Operators were served notice to vacate the space or suffer the consequences. Aframerican bootblacks sought to comply with the ordinance by placing their stands as close as possible to building walls. In May of 1899, two of the men named in the petition, John Willey and John Gibson, were brought to trial for obstructing the streets. The charge was incidental to the main concern, which was the presence of rivals who earned nickels without paying rent for their spaces.

By 1899 the question of rented spaces was a very important one. A report on bootblacking companies operated by Italians in 1899 discusses refusal of an offer of \$1500 for 10 chairs by owners of the largest and newest buildings.<sup>10</sup> The owners stated that \$3000 a year was the least they would consider.

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**P. J. FRANCIS,**  
**THE**  
**PIONEER JOBBER**

**WILL DO ALL KINDS OF HOUSE**  
Cleaning, Carpet Cleaning and  
Scouring, Whitewashing, Kalsomining  
and General Jobbing, at reasonable rates.  
Work promptly attended to.

Leave orders at A. P. Freeman's shoe  
shop, on Columbia street, or at bootblack  
stand, Yeeler-Leary building. my4

After moving to Seattle from Portland Phillip J. Francis ran  
this ad in an 1886 newspaper.

At the latter rate, each man would have to shine forty pairs of shoes for \$2 a day in order to pay his \$1 daily rent and the likely wage of \$1 a day.

Even more customers would be necessary in order for the company to make money. Profits gained or wages of the employees is not known, but the magnitude of such rentals is indicative of the fact that this occupation could be quite lucrative — more so, in fact, than many of the more prestigious jobs.

In September of 1900, John Willey was brought to trial a second time. The judicial ruling was that any bootblack stand in an alley (on city property) of the business district was a violation of the city ordinance.

A double standard of justice was clearly revealed by this ruling as testimony introduced in the case mentioned that some businessmen rented city-owned property. Indeed the very act of bringing pressure on owners of alley stands was the work of moneyed persons who sought to increase their income.

In spring of 1901 the first police raids on alley stands were made. Acting on the request of the Board of Public Works to remove those structures occupying city property, police loaded several stands on an express wagon and took them to a city lot in back of police headquarters at the northeast corner of Yesler at Third Avenue.

That April an ordinance was introduced in the City Council meeting which provided that bootblacks be allowed use of public alleys up to 30

inches from the property line, provided that prior permission be obtained from the adjoining property owner. Any bootblack entering this arrangement was required to file a \$100 bond as pledge to keep the alley clean.

Three weeks later this proposal was put to vote at a lively Council session during which the ordinance was passed. The opposing arguments centered around some members' expressed convictions that public thoroughfares should not be used for private purposes, and other members' consideration of the fact that several businesses occupied large portions of public property, such as a generous slice of Railroad Avenue used by the Moran Brothers' Shipbuilding Company.

Just how many bootblacks took advantage of this more "protective" ordinance is not known, but the policy of the Board to discourage the use of public property by bootblack stands by establishing the \$100 bond, and requiring owners' permission and probable rental fee for occupation of their property, certainly would have had the effect of eliminating the more marginal businesses, which most of these were.

Aframericans did not organize to the extent that the Italians did. There was an effort among the former to organize a union in 1895 in order to set the price of a shoe shine at ten cents. Apparently shortlived, this union is not mentioned in any of the cases which grew out of the tensions and competition of the late nineties although one defendant, John Gibson, was a member of the union.

After his arrival about 1897, Zacharias Woodson employed two or three bootblacks to run stands in the south end of Pioneer Square. There were a few others involved in similar enterprises but their names are unrecorded.

From the early nineties a few persons tried to make a living as singers, musicians, comedians, and actors. Some became fairly well known around town, but it is not clear whether or not their talent was compensated to the extent that they could live on their wages. Some of the local band members held other jobs, and played in the bands during weekends and evenings.

The sporting area provided subsidiary employment to piano players, bartenders, bouncers, laundresses, seamstresses and cooks.

By late 1899 many jobs were available, and laborers were much in demand. For perhaps the first time in the city's history, the demand for common laborers was greater than the supply. Wages had climbed to an average of \$2 a day. In October of 1901 Cayton reported that 50 to 100 black men were working on street and building construction.

Several Victorians came to Seattle as employees of families who moved here. Many of the older ones continued their work as servants. For some it was simple security, for others it offered an exposure to experiences they would never have otherwise had. Lewis Wilson, after two months' travel in England with his employer in 1901, thought it "the only country in the world for a black man."<sup>11</sup>



JOHN THOMAS GAYTON  
U. S. Court Bailiff

Mississippi-born John T. Gayton came to Seattle in 1889 as a servant. By the time of his retirement in 1954, he was federal court librarian.

### PATRIARCH OF THE COURT

Younger persons often sought employment elsewhere after their arrival. John Thomas Gayton was in his early twenties when he accompanied a white family to Seattle. He was born in Benton, Mississippi about 1866, the son of former slaves. His formal education extended to the "fourth reader." As a teenager he moved to Yazoo City, Mississippi and was employed as coachman by the Yandells. When the family decided to move here, Mr. Gayton accompanied them. He remained in their employ for a while before working as a painter, then painting contractor, bellboy, waiter and headwaiter at the Rainier Club, while studying bookkeeping at Wilson's Modern Business College. In 1901 he was hired as the first black steward at the Rainier Club, earning the substantial sum of \$100 a month. His reputation grew, and he was much in demand as caterer for large parties and banquets as well as for a downtown restaurant on a daily basis.

Whether or not Gayton's appointment as Sheriff's Deputy during the Fire of 1889 aroused his interest in the law is not known, but while working as a steward he studied law, although he never took the bar examination. At present two of Mr. Gayton's grandsons, Thomas and Gary Gayton, are practicing attorneys, and another, Donald Phelps, is president of Seattle Central Community College.

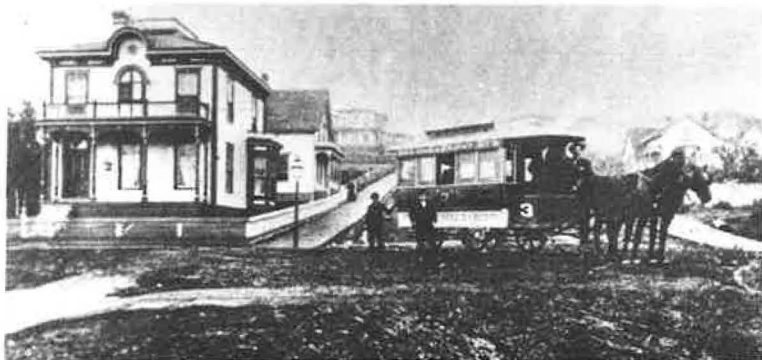
Taking a cut in salary in 1904, Mr. Gayton accepted appointment as messenger, then bailiff, of the District Court which he watched grow from its infancy. In August of 1933 he was appointed Federal Court Librarian where his knowledge of the law and the Court library proved an invaluable aid to many of Seattle's attorneys, some of whom still practice. Over the forty odd years that he remained he became a familiar figure of the U.S. Court with the flower in his lapel and his pince-nez attached to a black silk cord. By the time of his retirement in 1953 he had served under every federal judge to preside since Washington's admission to statehood.

### CITY, COUNTY AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Black people were almost totally absent from government work on any level during the territorial period. Nor were they well represented in the early years of statehood. A black man is listed as warden of the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island in the 1870 federal census. Cayton reports George Grose served briefly as customs inspector.<sup>12</sup> Rudolph Scott of Spokane was Deputy Internal Revenue Collector in the Osoyoos district near the Canadian border in the 1890s and George Grose was day watchman in the Assay office in 1898, as was John Merguson at a later date.

Appointments and nominations for positions with the various governments were usually rewards for support of political parties. Black people had very little political influence, and that is a partial explanation for their absence in the employ of the city, county, and state.

The first black person mentioned as a city employee is George Williams, first driver of the city's horsedrawn street car, whom Cayton states was a "long familiar sight on city streets."<sup>13</sup> The May 24, 1887 *P.I.*



George Williams drove Seattle's first streetcar, shown here at Second and Pike in 1884.

announces the appointment of a "colored boy named Ginger" in company with the city's best known juvenile delinquent, Patsy Carroll, as dog catchers. In the following days the boys energetically lassoed and captured more dogs than had ever before been taken in the city. Despite curses, kicks, and blows from irate dog owners, they faithfully performed their duty, earning ten cents for each captive animal.

From the early nineties until well after the turn of the century, the position of dogcatcher, animal herder and poundmaster was often the occupation of black men. A disagreeable job, the day's work began as the dogcatcher and his assistant started out every morning with a crated wagon, a wire lasso to each man, and a revolver between them. They caught on the average of six untagged dogs a day which were caged in the wagon, and subsequently taken to the pound.



Dog catcher Wiley Benton wears his star, which identifies him as a city official in 1899.

Wiley Benton, in an August 20, 1899 interview with a *P.I.* reporter, described the work in detail:

*We very seldom have to use the weapon. The revolver is carried more as a protection against the assaults of angry men than dogs.*

*Dog catching isn't a pleasant business, . . . Look at my hands. See here where I was bitten through the forefinger of the right hand last*





The work of a dog catcher was not pleasant.

*week and here where I nearly had the back of my left hand torn off. We always carry turpentine and a stick of caustic on the wagon and as soon as we are bitten we cauterize the wounds.*

*The small boys and girls stand on the sidewalk and as the wagon goes by address us about as follows: 'Goody, goody, goody, old smarty. Didn't get 'em, did you? Oh, you old thief. Wish the dogs would eat you up,' and so on.*

*I've had more than one fisticuff since I've been dog catcher. If we get a woman's dog, we always drive away rapidly, but it's nothing to have an angry woman follow us a block, calling us every name she can think of, and both Nichols and myself have been assaulted by women. They scratch and some of them swear and say things about dog catchers that you couldn't print. It's no use trying to reason with them, and if you don't want to get scratched the best plan is to run.*



Assaults on persons in this line of work were common, and some of them were reported in newspapers, particularly when they developed into threats of violence or full scale fights.

The closest threat of mob violence against a black man in Seattle occurred in July of 1893 when dogcatcher James A. Coleman captured an untaged dog which was being walked by its owner, a city fireman. The owner objected and was said by some to have fished a tag from his vest pocket. Coleman emphatically stated the specifics of the ordinance which required that the tag be attached to the dog's collar, and decided to impound the dog. Its owner's vigorous protest was enthusiastically supported by a quickly-formed crowd. Taking umbrage at unkind references to his race, Mr. Coleman exercised, for the first time, his authority as a city official and placed the fireman under arrest. This action greatly displeased the crowd, which rained curses upon him. Mr. Coleman stood his ground, however, and marched the protestor to the police station where he was charged with disorderly conduct, required to post \$20 bail, and a one dollar fine to reclaim his dog.

Two months later, and perhaps in retaliation for the arrest, the pound, at the corner of Fifth and Weller, was broken into and thirty-eight dogs were released. As the dogcatcher paid for the dogs' food at the time, being reimbursed by the owners at fifty cents for each day in the pound, Mr. Coleman suffered quite a loss.

Assaults were not limited to dogcatchers. During June of 1899, residents of the vicinity of Pike Street and Boylston Avenue complained of horses running loose in the night. City herder Walter Washington and his assistant Elisha Francis attempted to confiscate the loose animals, but met such strong opposition from the owner, that a fist fight ensued.

In September of that same year Mr. Francis had a charge of assault and battery brought against him after he was accused of striking a girl with a fence picket. As the story goes, Francis raised his hand in a threatening manner as the mother of the girl protested his abuse of a horse. At this gesture the girl caught hold of him. He denied hitting the girl, stating that he only used force in disengaging her clasp.

Not only were these workers subject to verbal and physical abuse, but they were also subject to gross discrimination in pay and workload. A bitter denunciation of this unfair policy appeared in an editorial of the *Seattle Republican* in August of 1894. It stated:

*The colored men voted almost as a unit for the late city ticket, and the only recognition they have received for their fidelity is "bull catcher" at a salary of \$60 a month, when the previous white incumbent received \$115 a month. The position of dog catcher, which previously paid \$80 a month, has recently been saddled onto the poundmaster, and he must do the two for \$60 when white men received nearly \$200 a month for the same amount of work.<sup>14</sup>*

Despite this complaint, black men continued to seek this position because jobs were scarce throughout much of the nineties.

Under the city charter of 1890 police officers were legally required to be U.S. citizens and city residents for at least one year before assignment to positions. The October 20, 1890 *Telegraph* reports that one of the officers, "it is claimed," was not a U.S. citizen. By late 1889 Seattle had at least one non-white "special" policeman who was permitted a billy club and a pair of handcuffs. He also had the power to arrest blatant violators of the law. This man, Jim Murphy, was part Indian.

In August of 1890, Isaac Wesley Evans was appointed to the police force, becoming the first black man to serve in this capacity. Evans came to Seattle in 1888 from Minneapolis where he had served as policeman. For some months prior to his appointment, he is reported to have sought to "pull strings" for placement as city jailer.<sup>15</sup> At the time of his appointment he was forty years old.

He was first assigned to office duty, but within a week was serving on a downtown beat. After about ten days on the force, reporters were told by an official at police headquarters that Mr. Evans had resigned. About an hour later a Seattle *Telegraph* reporter found Mr. Evans and inquired about his resignation. Evans emphatically denied his resignation, but stated that he may have been fired. He returned to police headquarters where he held a quick conference with an official there. Then he made an embarrassing and contradictory statement to the reporter, confirming that he resigned that same night.<sup>16</sup>

The very nature of the position, the exercise of authority over white men, given the attitudes of the times, was inevitably one of much controversy. Rumors and denials swirled around the appointment for nearly a month, many of them reported by the Democratic paper. A group of Republicans in the city were said to have called on the Police Chief asking for Evans's dismissal.<sup>17</sup> In the initial report of his appointment he was said to be an appointee of the Republican mayor. The latter denied the report and a city councilman by the name of McKenzie stated his responsibility for Evans's appointment.

The black community observed the events with a great deal of interest, speculation, and some disappointment. Mr. Evans, seeking to soothe the growing black unease about what some felt to be a betrayal by Republicans, addressed the Young Men's Colored Republican Club on September 6, 1890, and again a week later. Both times he gave them a "nice little family talk," urged support of the Republican City ticket, and in a further attempt at face-saving, declared that he resigned from the force of his "own free will [and that], on account of treachery in the ranks of his black brethren, his services were needed in the campaign."<sup>18</sup>

On September 29, 1890 Mr. Evans, identified as "turnkey" at city jail, handed in his resignation to the mayor, stating in part that he "could not fill the position on account of other business engagements"

which he had entered into since his appointment. Speaking with a *P.I.* reporter later that day he expressed thanks to Councilman McKenzie and his other friends for the interest they had taken in his appointment to the position.<sup>19</sup>

The effective date of the resignation was not given in the reports of the event, nor is it clear what happened after tender of his resignation. There is a report of a beating sustained by Mr. Evans at the hands of a member of the chain gang, while the former was on duty as jailer in January of 1891.<sup>20</sup> The prisoner, a much larger man than Mr. Evans, expressed the dislike of Mr. Evans by the chain gang and their resentment at having a black man in charge of them. The attacker's fine was quickly paid by a group of teamsters.

On January 17, 1891 Mr. Evans, day jailer, and the night jailer were suspended without pay pending an investigation into the escape of an accused murderer. Following the investigation Evans was discharged by the Board of Police Commissioners effective from the time of his suspension.

Mr. Evans filed suit for his salary during the one and a half month suspension and four months later won a \$132 judgment based on a \$90 a month rate. This is the first record of a black person's suit against the City of Seattle.

The city employed several other people in a variety of jobs during the period. Cayton mentions George Grose as an assistant to the city clerk for two terms, although Mr. Grose is not officially listed. Mr. Cayton, himself, held the position of city printer from 1896 to 1900. He lost the contract after a change in the city charter restricted contract holders to established daily newspapers.

In the nineties white and black men could be seen, just as night fell, equipped with brooms and brushes, flushing the downtown streets and sweeping them until they looked like well-kept floors. Green Fields is still remembered by some of Seattle's older citizens as the "old colored man with the broom." He came to Seattle prior to the fire of 1889 and swept city streets up to the early teens. Other black men worked as street sweepers, but Mr. Fields held the longest tenure among them.

Although the number of Blacks in city employment was small, they sought work there throughout the period of concern. B. F. Starke served as a quarantine officer for the city in 1898. A handful of men found work tending gardens in city parks. James Blocker sought a janitorial job to supplement the income from his butcher shop in 1890 but the request was tabled by the City Council. A similar request by Brittain Oxendine on behalf of others had like results in 1891. In time a few people were given such jobs.

In 1892 eight or more different nationalities were members of the Seattle Fire Department. The *Seattle Telegraph* of February 29, 1892 reports them as Americans, Scandinavians, Germans, Canadians, Irish,



Green Fields was familiar to many present-day residents. A Queen Anne Hill resident, he was a veteran of the Civil War.

English, Scotch and Welsh. Although most of them were U.S. citizens, the *Telegraph* reported that two or three of them were not.

The *Seattle Standard* reported in July of 1893 that it had been informed by black Democrats following the last election that an Afro-american Fire Company would be established. Editorially, it called upon the mayor for an explanation as to why such action had not been taken.<sup>21</sup>

In July or August of 1893 a company was organized by the black residents of the Madison Street area, and it applied to the fire department for recognition. The outcome is not known, but there is no mention of the company in subsequent issues of the daily papers, or weekly issues of the *Seattle Republican*.

The March 3, 1900 edition of the *Republican* notes that "if all things work well" Dr. Burdette would be rewarded for his faithful service to the Republican party by appointment as city veterinary surgeon at \$1500 annual salary. But the optimism was premature, and Dr. Burdette was nominated, instead, as a successful candidate for wreck-master.



Georgia-born Seaborn J. Collins was the first Black elected county official.

Work for the county was as limited as that for the city. Aframericans sought both appointive and elective positions in county employment, but such jobs were few. By 1892 the shipping industry had grown to such an extent that an accumulation of ballast in the harbor was a problem. Such a collection required removal which could be handled by a wreckmaster. This elective position was the earliest won by a black man in King County. In 1892, the Republicans nominated Seaborn J. Collins, who was elected for the position.

In June of 1898 W. S. Gales was appointed deputy sheriff by the Populist sheriff then serving. This was a long-sought post, and just before Gales's appointment, a group of Republicans had been approached about such a position for a black man. Their refusal to consider this proposal was based on their expressed fear that he would be knifed by "certain elements" on account of his race.<sup>22</sup>

Gideon S. Bailey came to Franklin in 1891 as one of the strikebreakers. He helped to organize the Republican club at Franklin, and was an early backer of the *Seattle Standard* newspaper. He was a strong advocate of Black self-help and became the first president of the Washington State Afro-American League in 1891. In 1894 he was appointed justice of the peace at Franklin, becoming the first Aframerican in the Northwest to serve in this capacity. Although he became a citizen of Seattle in the late 1890s, his position as justice was one of prestige and pride among Aframericans throughout the state. J. E. Hawkins announced his candidacy for justice of the peace in 1900, but failed to secure a Republican nomination.

There were other persons who held county jobs, mainly as janitors here and there. Fred Lawrence was chief cook at the county jail at the time of his death in 1900. He was succeeded by T. C. Collins.

Various men from around the state, Seattle included, served in menial, or low-ranking jobs during legislative sessions beginning with

the constitutional convention and the first legislative session and extending throughout the period, but state employment of any permanence was nonexistent.

The federal government has long been one of the few agencies providing an alternative to heavy, dirty, menial jobs for Blacks, although the choices have usually been on the lower end of the pay scale. Nevertheless, until quite recently and largely because of severe limitations elsewhere, these lower ranking jobs were generally thought of as "good jobs" mainly because they provided steady work. Blacks were concentrated mostly in the postal service, and in Seattle they began to occupy some postal jobs by 1900.

Walter Merguson was eighteen when he became a student at Wilson's Modern Business College in 1899. In February of 1900 he took the civil service examination for post office clerk, and placed first among 47 aspirants. His performance so startled the white citizenry that even the *Issaquah Independent* commented on it.<sup>23</sup> The *Republican* reports his assignment to duty as a clerk in the March 2, 1900 edition. In September of 1900 Alfred Hall, having scored third highest on the exam, was also assigned work in the Port Office. Postal clerks began work as auxiliaries at \$500 a year. There was no law determining the time of an increase in salary. The promotion to regular clerk brought a \$600 annual salary, but there was no provision in the law for further advancement or pay increase, and it was not unusual for many people to spend their lives as regular clerks. There was also a black janitor at the Post Office in 1901.

Eugene Harris placed first on a civil service exam for stenographer in 1901, and in July of that year was assigned to Walla Walla as official stenographer for the U.S. Land Office there. His pay for the first six months was \$75 a month, to be increased to \$1500 a year upon satisfactory performance.

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## **WM. HEDGES**

**Will deliver good Cord Wood,  
sawed in three pieces, at \$4  
a Cord!**

Leave your orders at the  
**PIONEER BATHING ESTABLISHMENT.**

During the hard times of 1870, William Hedges attempted an additional means of making money.



A sprinkling of Blacks in other federal positions could be seen from the late nineties. There were a few men working at the Navy yard at Bremerton, among them Frank Alfred.

A few men found employment in the military. Feeling the pinch of the Depression of 1893, local white men joined the armed forces. At this writing I do not know that this was true of black men as entrance to military service was more difficult for them because of quotas. But a few recruits from the local population were dispatched throughout the middle and late nineties to such western outposts as Fort Custer, Montana, a garrison of the 10th Cavalry.

In 1898 patriotic fever swept the country in the wake of tensions between the United States and Spain over events in Cuba and elsewhere. People wanted to "help the country." They volunteered to go and fight to maintain American honor. As hostilities between the two nations deepened, black men all over the country became restless and sought participation as soldiers. "Soldiers, not servants" was their motto. From many places in the country offers of all-black regiments, led by black officers, were sent to President McKinley, who referred them to the War Department, which consigned most of them to oblivion. Taking note of the small number of eligible black men in the Northwest, Dr. Burdett offered the services of a regiment of Aframerican Infantry volunteers to be called the "Pacific Northwest Rifles."

Dr. Samuel Burdett, a Kentucky native, came to Seattle in 1891. Like many other soldiers he settled in the West after his retirement from the army. He fought in the last two years of the Civil War, and was present at Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox. In 1866, he became a member of the 9th Cavalry and served with it for eighteen years. By the time of his resignation he had risen through the ranks to veterinary surgeon.

The plan called for recruitment from California, Oregon and Washington. Such a force would be commanded by noncommissioned officers of the regular army then serving in the 24th and 25th Infantry, and the 9th and 10th Cavalry.

In an interview with a *P.I.* reporter on May 9, 1898, Dr. Burdett spoke of the patriotic feelings of the men and their eagerness to enlist. He also stated categorically:

*Our young men are anxious not only to enlist, but to get to the front promptly, so as to take part in the fighting if there is any to be done. We don't care to go into service if there is to be no actual fighting; but if there is we want to be there and take part in it.*

The rejection of their application left a residue of bitterness among Seattleites. The question of Aframerican officers for Aframerican troops was debated for a long time nationally. Pressure was applied to the War Department throughout the Spanish-American War. There were a few minor concessions, such as selection of black company officers, although white field officers were retained.

## TO ENLIST COLORED TROOPS.

Local Recruiting Office Receives  
Orders From Washington.

MANY MECHANICS ARE NEEDED.

Cavalry Arm for Foreign Service Is  
Now at Full Strength—Seattle Is  
Contributing Her Quota of Sol-  
diers for Foreign and Home Serv-  
ice—Government Finds No Trouble  
in Getting Good Fighting Men.

Corporal Stuart, in charge of the local recruiting office, yesterday received instructions from the war department to enlist colored men to fill out Companies B and M, of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, now stationed at Fort Wright, Spokane. This is the first enlistment order regarding colored troops ever handled in Seattle, and gives rise to the belief that the Twenty-fourth is soon to join the eight companies now in Manila, in foreign service. Beside these ten companies, one company of this regiment is now stationed at Skagway and another at Fort Harrison, Helena, Mont.

This appeal was made in 1900. The War Department ignored Aframerican efforts to organize a company of volunteers from the Northwest during the Spanish-American War.

Children of Spanish-American war veterans inevitably mention the role of black soldiers in Cuba, with particular emphasis on the Battle of San Juan Hill in 1898. For Aframericans throughout the country, the role of black soldiers there was a source of much pride. Many years after the War, pictures of black soldiers charging up the Hill could be found on the walls of black homes, in much the same way that one presently sees pictures of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Chester Dixon began a 37-year Navy career in 1898 which included the Spanish-American War. His sister Theresa Dixon Flowers recalls how he began his career:

*He went in the Navy at fifteen. He wanted to go and he just kept running away from school. He never got into any trouble. The police would bring him back, but he didn't want to go to school. He wanted adventure. He wanted to travel. And finally Momma and Poppa promised him that the next time the training ship came to Seattle that they would go down and sign him in the Navy and that's what happened. But he says, they put him right in school! He made a very good success of it. He was strictly a military man.<sup>24</sup>*

Mr. Dixon graduated from gunnery school in Newport, Rhode Island and became Chief Gunner's Mate before his retirement from the Navy.



Mr. Dixon graduated from gunnery school in Newport, Rhode Island and became Chief Gunner's Mate before his retirement from the Navy.

In August of 1900 an edict from the War Department was issued with specific instructions for enlisting men to fill out companies B and M of the 24th Infantry then stationed at Fort Wright, near Spokane. A few Seattleites were accepted, following this announcement. This garrison was to contribute in a small way to the population of 20th century Spokane and Seattle.

Enlistment of local men continued after 1900 but Blacks were less favored candidates than whites. As late as October 1901, the *Seattle Times* carried an ad soliciting white applicants for service in the tropics. Several years after the garrisoning of Fort Lawton in 1901, black men were stationed there, and some of them remained in Seattle with their families after their retirement from the Army. Living in Seattle today are descendants of Spanish-American War veterans Frank Jenkins, Pressley Holiday, Samuel Chappel, Henry C. Bell, and Joseph Staton.

### 3 Businesses

*To be employed and to be one's own  
master, both are sweet . . . .*  
Ecclesiasticus 40:18a

Most of the Aframericans who came to Seattle prior to the eighties were self-employed in small businesses and trades. In the early decades of the town's settlement it was almost a necessity. Except for Yesler's Mill, there was very little employment outside of what one could do for oneself in the 1860s. A few entered into cooperative ventures, most of which were of a few years' duration, cut short by dissolution or death. Family members worked in businesses and by the turn of the century women with clerical skills were hired by black businessmen.

Throughout the Victorian period they were concentrated in the barbering trade, and it was in this occupation that some of the most successful businesses were operated. From the very beginning of the black presence in Seattle, those persons in skilled trades and small businesses depended upon white clientele. Until the nineties there weren't enough Aframericans in the entire county to support a black barber, restaurateur, or hotelkeeper.

Through their sobriety, hard work, and thrift, Aframericans earned reputations as good, dependable citizens. Good reputations among white people sometimes meant conforming to their prejudices. Included in this behavior was the practice of some black barbers who continued until well into this century to shave only white men. They felt (probably correctly) that white people would not patronize a shop that catered to all races of people. As the population increased in the 1890s, the number of individuals willing to publicly challenge this practice also grew.

Know all men by these presents that I  
 Manuel Lopes of Seattle in the Territory of Washington  
 in consideration of the sum of two hundred and  
 fifty five dollars and thirty two cents to me in  
 hand paid the receipt whereof I hereby acknowledge  
 have and by these presents do grant bargain sell  
 assign transfer and set over unto Dexter Horton  
 and his assigns forever the following property  
 goods and chattels to wit: One house known as  
 the Restaurant and Barber Shop of the undersigned  
 one cook stove with all the fixtures belonging  
 thereto one dining room stove and the choppers  
 saw and cooking utensils belonging to the Restaurant  
 three bedsteads and beds one clock one table  
 one Barber's chair and stool together with all  
 the furniture belonging to said House of all  
 kinds whatsoever

In witness whereof I have hereunto  
 set my hand and seal this day of Dec 3 -  
 1859

Presence of Manuel P. Lopes

J. S. Hunt

H. G. Hyde

Filed for record Dec 3d 1859

and filed 6th 1860

John Pike  
 Notary Public King Co.

#### Bill of Sale of Manuel Lopes's house and furnishings, 1859.

Except in a few cases, Aframerican businesses did not pay much more than a job for someone else would have paid. Nor were the hours any better. In fact, they probably were longer than those of most persons working for others. The important difference was that they were self-employed, and had control over their own affairs.

#### MANUEL LOPES, PIONEER AND PATRIOT

Black businesses in Seattle date from the opening of the village's first barber shop by Manuel Lopes in the 1850s. He arrived in Seattle in 1852, and operated a barbershop equipped with the first barber chair to be brought around Cape Horn. He also operated a restaurant in the small frame building which housed the barber shop and his sleeping quarters on First Avenue South.<sup>1</sup>

He was born in Africa about 1812, and evidence points to his probable kidnapping and enslavement prior to coming to New England. He was either a native of the Cape Verde Islands or had been held captive there before coming to Maine and later settling in the New Bedford area of Massachusetts which, by the 1840s, had a small Cape Verdean population. He gives his birthplace to census takers variously as Africa, France and lastly as the "Captive Isles," but most often Africa, and he is always recorded as "black" rather than "mulatto."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he sought to obscure his origins as a slave in this country, which some people of that background were ashamed to admit. Like many men of African origin in Massachusetts in the 1830s and 1840s, he was a sailor. It is impossible to say at this writing whether or not he worked on whaling ships, as did a large number of the New Bedford community, but he was known by early Puget Sound residents as a sailor.

The sale of Lopes's property in 1859 raises a lot of unanswered questions, but he is listed in the federal census as a barber and the sole black resident of King County in 1860. He is also listed in the census of 1870 as a barber. Sometime after the latter census was taken, he moved to Port Gamble, a place which he came to love. He lived there until his admission to Providence Hospital in 1885 for dropsy.<sup>3</sup>

Lopes was known throughout the region for his generosity. He furnished meals to his customers, mostly loggers, millhands, sailors and miners, whether they had the price or not. He befriended and employed Robert Dixon when he first came to Seattle in 1865. Dixon was later to use Lopes's barber chair in his own shop.

Despite his foreign birth and color, he seemed to have been comfortable here. Early settlers remember him as a snare drummer, the only one in Seattle in the 1850s.<sup>4</sup> Fervently patriotic, he led the villagers' annual Fourth of July procession as they marched around the shacks and stumps, parading through the mud to the beat of his drum. Sometime later a fife player named Kelly came to town, and the two of them fueled the patriotism of the little community.

His snare drum was a joke in the village because mealtimes, especially those at noon, were signalled by the beating of the drum. In time, only strangers thought it remarkable that meals should be announced in that manner.

## COMMERCIAL STREET BUSINESSES

By 1865 Lopes was joined by other black people who were living and working in the town. Virginia-born William Hedges was an energetic man who came to Seattle about 1863. Within a year he was operating the "Hair Dressing and Shaving Saloon" two doors south of the Post Office. He featured hot or cold baths for 25 cents, in conjunction with barbering and shaving. He also cut and sold cords of wood during the hard times of 1870.

Matthias Monet, commonly referred to as M. F. Monet, was apparently an excellent cook. By 1864 he was operating the "Seattle Restaurant and Coffee Saloon" opposite the Yesler-Denny Company store. In 1865 he converted his restaurant into an oyster house called "Connoisseur's Retreat." Later that year Hedges and Monet signed a formal agreement of partnership in which each would maintain his previous business, while sharing the profits and risks of both. A year or two later, Monet sold out to Hedges for \$250 all "furniture and appurtenances of the restaurant."<sup>5</sup> In the economic crunch of 1867, Mr. Hedges found it necessary to mortgage these same goods for \$81.40.<sup>6</sup>

Following his retirement from the "Connoisseur's Retreat" Monet opened another restaurant next door to Doc Maynard's drugstore. It was called "The Railroad House," and he also took in boarders. He is

# CONNOISEUR'S RETREAT.

THE UNDERSIGNED returns his thanks to the inhabitants of Seattle and vicinity for their patronage, and calls their attention to the conversion of the SEATTLE RESTAURANT into an

## OYSTER SALOON AND A VERIFIABLE CHOP HOUSE.

He trusts that his long experience as caterer, his accustomed assiduity and desire to please the most fastidious, will merit a share of public patronage.

MONET.

n-43 tr

Seattle Feb. 25th, 1865.

Matthias Monet was proud of his culinary skills. He was praised in the local newspapers for his ability.

# BATHS!

AT THE

**Hair Dressing and Shaving Saloon,**

**Two doors South of the Post Office,**

**SEATTLE.**

**HOT, COLD AND SHOWER BATHS**

**Always in readiness.**

**no 174**

**WM. HEDGES, Proprietor.**

William Hedges owned more property in what is now present-day Seattle than any other black person during territorial days.

listed in the 1870 federal census as a lodging house operator whose real property was valued at \$875. By 1871 a depression largely effected by a slump in the lumber industry had settled over the ports and towns of Puget Sound. There were lots of idle men and before the end of the year, Mr. Monet had to mortgage all of the hotel's furniture. Somehow he managed to hang on and *The Weekly Intelligencer* of December 30, 1872, in publishing businesses from the new business directory, lists the Railroad House as one of two hotels in the city.

Archy Fox arrived in town about 1866 and he, too, operated a barber shop and bathhouse near the corner of Yesler and First Avenue South. He and Hedges consolidated their businesses, forming the Pioneer Bathing and Shaving Saloon in 1869. They were partners until Mr. Hedges' death in 1871, when Fox bought out Hedges' interest for \$125 cash. The next year Fox expanded into "new and commodious quarters, arranged with a special view to the accommodation of ladies as well as gents."<sup>7</sup> Robert Dixon worked in his barber shop and the men became lifelong friends. Mr. Fox is buried in the Grose-Dixon plot at Lake View Cemetery.

Until 1876, the Aframerican businesses were located on Commercial Street, which is now First Avenue South. In the early years this part of town was referred to as "on the sawdust." Before the town was settled by whites, it was an island surrounded by marsh which was gradually filled in with sawdust from Yesler's mill. Formerly the native people did their trading there.

Lopes's business was there, as were those owned by Hedges and Fox, and the restaurant and hotel owned by M. F. Monet. In 1869

# **PIONEER**

## **BATHING & SHAVING SALOON !**

**THE UNDERSIGNED BEG TO INFORM**  
the public that they have removed from their old stand to the opposite side of the street, adjoining the "Gem Saloon," where they will be happy to attend to their old customers, and endeavor to increase the number by strict attention to their business.

Hot and Cold Water BATHS, only 25 cents each.

**WILLIAM HEDGES .  
ARCHY FOX.**

Seattle, August 30, 1869.

Early settlers assisted newcomers by hiring them until they could operate businesses on their own.

Hedges laid a plank walk across the swamp from the town's commercial area to his bathhouse and barber shop, which after his remodeling was said to be "equal to any establishment of the kind on this coast."<sup>8</sup> David the Shiner's first employment office was at the corner of Main Street and First Avenue South, and James Blocker bought an employment office on the corner of First Avenue South and Washington in 1888.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE FREEMANS, FATHER AND SON**

Thomas P. Freeman was the first Aframerican to locate away from Commercial Street. He had come to Seattle with his family in 1872. Thomas, his wife Rosanna, and their sons Alfred and Asher were born in Pennsylvania. Their daughter, Harriet Anne, was born in California in 1858. Thomas and Alfred were shoemakers by trade, and they worked together until 1876. Asher, an Olympia restaurateur, died in a typhoid epidemic in 1882.

After nearly ten years of economic depression, a general optimism was prevalent in the Puget Sound country in 1876. In April of that year, T. P. Freeman, sharing in this hopeful view of the future, leased a two-story building at the corner of Yesler and Second Avenue from Henry Yesler. He sublet the second floor of this building. As part of the lease agreement he built an inside stairway to the second story and a balcony facing Yesler Way. He also agreed to paint the outside of the building.

After further conversion, Freeman opened his Pioneer Variety Store where he sold crockery, glassware, furniture, hardware and new and used goods. He was doing well enough that year to take out a half page ad in the 1876 business directory of the city.

In April of 1879 Freeman announced by an ad in the *Seattle Weekly Post*, the opening of a commission and storage house where he would sell goods for a certain percentage of the price, buy and sell second-hand goods, and store bulk merchandise at low rates. Apparently he did not renew his lease on the place at Second and Yesler. He reminds readers in the September 26, 1880 edition of the *Intelligencer* that he is "Not Dead Yet," but had moved his business to his residence on Third Street. There he returned to his trade of boot and shoe repair which he combined with selling goods on commission, selling secondhand goods and fitting keys to locks. He left Seattle in 1885 and lived in Portland for about five years. After his return in the early 1890s, he operated a shoe shop in a space at Second and Marion.

Al Freeman also took advantage of the flush times of 1879 when he bought out the owner of a First Avenue shoe store and added new merchandise. His effort was successful, and within a month of opening, the *Intelligencer* reported that he had "all the work he can get away with."<sup>10</sup>

Seattle was abuzz with talk of gold in the fall of 1879. Men from Oregon and played-out California gold fields poured into town, spending money to outfit themselves for prospecting in the upper Skagit Valley. Newspaper ads carried notices to miners needing boots or



Looking north on Commercial Street from Washington, this 1870 photograph gives some idea of the appearance of the street on which the earliest Aframerican businesses were located.



# T. P. FREEMAN

HAS OPENED A

## Commission and Storage House,

Will take all kinds of goods to sell on commission.

Will store goods in bulk at low rates.

Second hand goods bought and sold.

Goods sold at bed rock prices.

Call and examine for yourselves.

*Corner Second and Mill Streets,  
Seattle, W. T.*

1-107be

## NOT DEAD YET!

### T. P. FREEMAN

HAS REMOVED FROM FRONT STREET TO his residence on Third street, near the Third street Market.

Now I wish to be considered not in opposition to any one. I will

**Repair Boots and Shoes,**

**Fit Keys to Locks,**

**Take and sell goods on Commission.**

I have now for sale two second-hand

**Sewing Machines, Bedstead, Bed,**

**Chairs, Washstand, Tin Pans,**

**Tack Hammers, &c.,**

All of which will be sold cheap.

Orders can be left at the Postoffice, Box No. 68,  
which will receive prompt attention. sl4-tf

Thomas P. Freeman was the first black businessman to locate away from Commercial Street when he opened his business in 1876. He displayed his humor in 1880 while notifying his customers that he was still in business.

shoes, or repairs on either, that they would find first quality workmanship and materials at Freeman's.<sup>11</sup> The fancy city dresser also found his needs met here with eastern-made alligator boots and corksided shoes. Freeman also solicited orders from the country. By December of 1879 he was offering the Howe sewing machine for sale, informing the readers of his ad that they would make nice Christmas gifts.

Mr. Freeman's success soon raised the racial bugbear. In the early 1880s the *Intelligencer* carried ads from a store which specifically stated that its boots and shoes were made by white labor, and solicited purchase on that basis, at the same time that it carried Mr. Freeman's ads.

In 1882 he moved to a smaller shop at First and Columbia and remained there until the fire of 1889. At the time of the fire his business was insured for \$800.00. According to the commercial company, R. G. Dunn and Company, most businesses were not fully insured, but he was able to recoup that much of his loss.<sup>12</sup> He remained in Seattle until 1891 when he moved to Black Diamond. By 1900 he was living in Portland.

## **ALFRED P. FREEMAN,**



### **Boot and Shoemaker.**

**B**OOT AND SHOES OF ALL KINDS  
made to measure at reasonable prices.  
Repairing neatly, cheaply and promptly  
done.

All work in his line solicited and satisfaction guaranteed.

Shop on Columbia street near the engine house.

n2-1f

**A. P. FREEMAN.**

Alfred P. Freeman began his business in 1879.

## **WILLIAM GROSE AND "OUR HOUSE"**

In August of 1876 William Grose opened his "Our House" Restaurant on the south side of Yesler, just below First Avenue. He came to Seattle about 1860 after leading a varied life, which included a four-year stint in the Navy that took him to Japan for the signing of the Amity Treaty in 1854, and on a rescue mission to the Arctic.<sup>13</sup>

Grose was relieved from the Navy at San Francisco following a shipboard injury. Shortly afterwards he went into the California gold fields and became a leader of black men in the Montezuma, Columbia, and Sonora mining districts.<sup>14</sup> This leadership sometimes was translated into "defender" of the smaller brothers in the camps. He helped to form a western branch of the Underground Railroad, and because he spoke Spanish, he was delegated by black Californians to go to Panama to negotiate with the governor to halt the return of escaped slaves. Racial violence broke out in Panama following a series of provocations by white Americans en route to the California gold fields. Grose was in Panama during an uprising and led several white women and children to safety.<sup>15</sup>

Grose helped others to collect money to promote publication of the *Elevator*, one of the first Aframerican newspapers on the West Coast. Following the 1858 convention which decided to seek a haven from California oppression, he was among those men who made arrangements with Governor Douglas of British Columbia for the emigration of Aframericans to Victoria and the Fraser River area. He came to Seattle and the Puget Sound as a steward on the mailboat *Constitution*, which

## "OUR HOUSE."

WM. GROSS & SON, Props.,  
Mill Street, Seattle, Wash. Ter.

This hotel is located on the steamboat wharf, and is the best and cheapest hotel in the city for workmen. ~~Our~~ Table always supplied with the best the market affords.

Board and Lodging \$5.00 Board, per week \$1.00 Meals 25 cents Beds 25 cents.

~~Our~~ Baggage conveyed to and from the house free of charge.

William Grose (Gross) operated a three-story hotel on Yesler's Wharf from the time he built it in 1883 until it burned in 1889.

travelled between Victoria and Olympia. About 1860, Grose moved to Seattle. He took work doing what he knew best — cooking. At first he worked for others, then for himself beginning in 1876.

His "Our House" Restaurant attracted Seattle residents and men from around the Puget Sound. Like Manuel Lopes, Grose befriended many workingmen and extended credit to those in need of it. While addressing the 50th Annual Meeting of the Pioneer's Association, Robert Moran recalled that at age 19, with one dime in his pocket, he ate his first breakfast in Seattle at "Our House." Mr. Grose told him that his "credit was good until he found work." Passing his breakfast of pork sausages, flapjacks, and coffee through a crescent that he had cut between the kitchen and dining room, Mr. Grose called out, "come and get it."<sup>16</sup>

At the same meeting Charles Kinnear recalled passing by the restaurant and hearing Grose shout to the cook, "Scrape all of the dishes into one pot and make hash. First come, first served."

Although Mr. Grose could not write, he was a good businessman. In 1870 he bought a lot at Sixth and James Street. In 1882 he paid Henry Yesler \$1000 in gold for twelve acres of land in the East Madison District, which he used as a ranch until the Fire of 1889. He was reported by the Seattle *Telegraph* in 1891 to be worth a quarter of a million dollars.<sup>17</sup>

In the spring of 1883 he built a three-story hotel for workingmen on Yesler's Wharf which was also called "Our House." The Groses ran the hotel until it was destroyed in the 1889 fire. Unfortunately it was not covered by insurance. Oral tradition has it that the hotel was sold shortly before the fire and that Mr. Grose returned the purchase money to the two young buyers following its destruction.<sup>18</sup>

## EMPLOYMENT AGENTS

In March 1885 David Fletcher, better known as "David the Shiner" because of his past employment as a shoe shiner, went into the employment business. In his ad he offered to "supply seamen, loggers, coal miners, railroad laborers, mill men, cooks, farm hands and all other classes of labor at shortest notice."<sup>19</sup> Employers, including those out of town, could place an order for a person with certain qualifications with him. Fletcher would dispatch the worker to the site after collecting a percentage, or fixed sum out of the wages, from the worker. At the time of the Seattle Fire his business was located on Second Avenue between Marion and Madison. His ad listings were placed in the *Post Intelligencer* until just before the Fire.

James C. Blocker came to Seattle in 1878 as a butcher. Finding this and other employment closed to him by white labor unions, he worked

at odd jobs, and as a janitor. In April of 1888 he bought the Railroad Employment Office, complete with "all furniture, fixtures, employment business, and good will for \$100."<sup>20</sup> The property was located on the north side of Washington Street at First Avenue South.

In December of 1888 Allen Deans signed a five-year lease for a house and property on Jackson Street, and opened an employment agency.<sup>21</sup> He was joined there by T. C. Collins. Mrs. Oxendine wrote that it was at Deans and Collins's office that William Dixon and his late sister, Carrie Dixon Black, were left for safekeeping on the day of the great fire, as their mother Rebecca Grose Dixon anxiously searched the burning town for news of her husband, Robert, and her mother, Sarah Grose.<sup>22</sup>

## **DAVID THE SHINER'S Employment Office.**

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### **WANTED.**

Wood turner, \$3.50 der day; hotel porter, \$40 per month; girls to cook in families, \$20 and \$25 per month; 1 milker, \$30 per month; 4 men to slash, \$40 per month and board; woodsmen, \$50 per month; cooks, \$30 to \$50; railroad men, \$2, \$2.25 and \$2.50 per day; mill hands, \$30 per month; brickyard hands, \$2.25 per day; men to cut cordwood, \$1.35 per cord; waiters, \$10, \$11 and \$12 per week.

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**Second Street, Between Marlon and Madison.**

David Fletcher began operation of his employment agency in 1885.

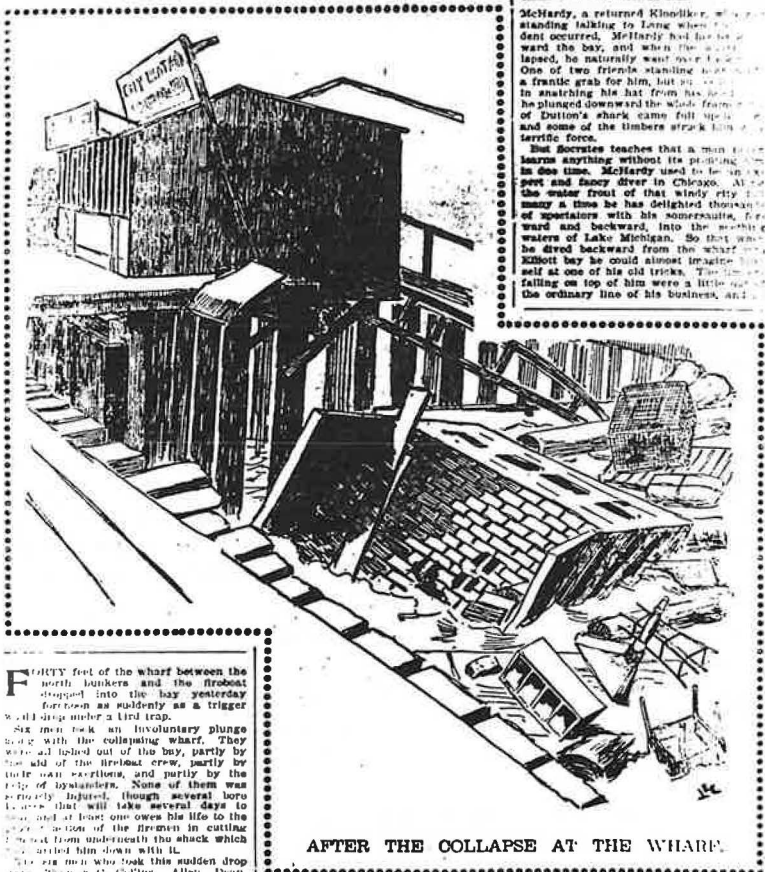
After the fire, Mr. Deans left the business and operated a cigar stand at Second Avenue near Madison. Collins, like most Seattle citizens, resumed business, as usual, in a tent. In 1890 he leased part of the entrance to N. F. Butt's barbershop in the basement of the Kline and Rosenberg Building at Second and Cherry. He combined the employment agency with a real estate office. About 1892 he joined David the

Shiner at 203 Washington Street, where he remained until 1899. Several other people ran employment agencies. They included Seaborn J. Collins, Dr. Burdett, and Thomas Reed.

## RESTAURATEURS

From the days of Manuel Lopes, Aframericans had been restaurateurs. The rise of James H. Orr from waiter to proprietor of a large hotel restaurant was discussed in the Men's Work section.

## RICKETY WHARF COLLAPSES, CARRYING SIX MEN SUDDENLY INTO THE BAY.



In 1899 Allen Deans and T.C. Collins were business partners until their restaurant went into the bay with the worm-eaten wharf on which it was located.



Mrs. Elizabeth Thorne operated a restaurant at Second and Cherry throughout the early years of statehood. Her first husband died in a Confederate prison during the Civil War.

Thomas C. Collins also operated restaurants. In 1899 he managed a restaurant in West Seattle and that same year rejoined Allens Deans, this time in the operation of a small lunch counter and cigar stand on a wharf at the foot of Madison Street. Oldtimers still remember the collapse of whole sections of wharves brought about by the eating away of pilings by busy teredo worms. On April 12, 1899 an entire section housing a fish market, Collins and Deans's restaurant, and a group of dogs held for sale to northern bound prospectors, collapsed into the bay carrying the complete structure, and six men, including Collins and Deans, with it. A small sloop was buried beneath the debris. Everyone was rescued, but Collins and Deans sustained multiple bruises. Collins brought an unsuccessful \$5000 damage suit against the owners of the wharf on the grounds that an illness resulting from his plunge in the bay prevented him from working at his trade of cooking.

Several other people ran restaurants for varying lengths of time. Mrs. Olivia Washington and a Mr. Goldborough ran the "Issaquah" at 70 Yesler Way before selling out to a Mr. Lyons, who advertised meals at 15¢ and up in 1901.<sup>23</sup>

Several other women ran restaurants during the period, including Mrs. Elizabeth Thorne. Most of them were small operations. It was at such a small business, operated by a Mrs. Harding, that the nucleus of the A.M.E. Church met in January 1890.

## BUILDERS

The Seattle Directory of 1889 lists some cooperative businesses, among them, Collins and Deans discussed above. Booker and Harvey are listed under General Painters. Not much is known about James



Booker, but at the time of the Fire he was living at the present site of the Arcade Plaza on Second Avenue, and Charles and Eva Harvey and their young baby, Gertrude, were living in the rear of the house. Mr. Booker was an expert carpenter and woodworker. A sample of his work is shown in this section. He and Mr. Harvey were joint operators of the Handicap Company until the town burned.

Charles H. Harvey first came to Seattle while working as a railroad porter in the 1880s. He and his pregnant wife, Eva, moved to Seattle in 1887. Following the Fire, they lived in various places and he followed several different occupations, among them painter, shoemaker and building contractor. As the population grew over the last decade of the century, the need for housing increased, and black men had no trouble finding work requiring skills in construction and finishing work, as well as painting and wallpapering.

Mr. Harvey is listed in the weekly *Bulletin* for September, 1899 under Construction and Painting, with an office in the basement of the Pioneer Building. By the turn of the century Seattle was in a building boom, and Mr. Harvey was employing from 15 to 20 men annually in his contracting business. The January 3, 1902 issue of the *Seattle Republican* reported that "he generally has contracts from one to three months ahead." His daughter Gertrude Wright states:

*I understand that he railroaded . . . but that wasn't his line of work. He was really a painter and interior decorator. He and Mr. Booker worked together. Then he had a very bad spell of illness, what they called "Painter's Colic," and the doctor said he could no longer work in oil paints. That's how he came to take up carpentry. He became a good carpenter, and that's what he did until he retired. His real life was paints. He had his own business. I can see that desk now in the family home, all his papers and everything.<sup>24</sup>*

Mr. Harvey maintained his contracting business until the late 1920s.

Charles Harvey (pictured) and James Booker formed the Handicap Company, a paint and carpentry business, in the late 1880s.





Newel post in the house James H. Booker built for his family in 1905. Presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hayward Roberts.

Another builder and contractor remembered by many oldtimers was Robert W. Butler, who, from about 1895 through the first decade of this century, built several buildings in the city. Unfortunately names and locations of structures do not survive, but it was in one such building that many newcomers to Seattle found housing. Mr. Butler formed a partnership with a Mr. Tibbs in 1901. In 1906 they erected the Woodson Apartment House on the northeast corner of 12th and Pike, which is still standing.

## **R. W. BUTLER**

### **CARPENTER. CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER**

Jobbing promptly attended to. Basement  
Pioneer Building, First avenue and James  
street. Telephone White 562.

**SEATTLE, WASH.**

Robert W. Butler built several buildings from the late nineties to the early twentieth century, including one still standing at the corner of 12th and Pike.

### **THE BALL FAMILY**

The Ball family moved to Seattle in early 1902. Their first business announcement appeared in the March 27, 1892 edition of the *P.I.* which described their photo studio as "handsomely fitted up." Included in the notice was the message that "all callers will be made welcome."

Globe Photo Studio was located at Second and Marion Street, with family living quarters in the rear. In April of 1892 the *P.I.* noted that the new Aristo photo process was "unsurpassed in clearness, brilliance and durability" and was a specialty of the business.

James P. Ball, Sr. was born in 1827, and spent his early years in Cincinnati, Ohio. In the 1840s he opened a photography business, becoming the first Aframerican to attempt a business in Cincinnati. He was active in the anti-slavery cause and well-known in Abolitionists circles in England and America.<sup>25</sup>

Each member of the family, James P. Ball, Sr., his wife, Laura, both sons, James, Jr. and Robert, as well as the daughter, Estella, were photographers and all of them worked in the family business at one time or another over the next decade. They remained at their first location for five years. After 1897, the "Ball and Sons" on the shingle hanging in front of the studio door at First and Columbia referred to Mrs. Laura Ball, who was assisted by her daughter and sons. James Ball, Sr. helped with heavy work loads during the turn of the century, but he was often involved with organizing Shriners' lodges in the state, selling advertisements for the *Republican*, and seeking relief for his rheumatism. The business continued until about 1904 when both sons moved to Hawaii with their families and their sister. Mrs. Laura Ball then worked as an artist, and later as a dressmaker. James Ball, Sr. died in Hawaii in 1904.



Former abolitionist James P. Ball and his family began operation of the Globe Photo Studio in 1892.

## THE FIRST BUSINESS

Barbering was the first business that black men entered in Seattle. There was a succession pattern in that trade during the 1860s and 1870s. An established barber would hire a newcomer who worked for him until his death, or until the new man could start out on his own. This was true from Hedges to Fox to Dixon. Dixon joined Fox a few years prior to the latter's death. Dixon remained a barber for almost 50 years, and his shop became an important gathering place for the exchange of news among longtime residents of the Puget Sound country.

There were other barbers in business during the Victorian era. W. A. Scott began operation about 1881 after moving to Seattle from Columbia County. He moved to Kent following the Fire, and carried on a successful truck farm in the following years. He also sold timber, and leased roadway for lumbering companies to cross his land. N. F. Butts began operation of a barber shop about 1888 and continued after the Fire. Edward Hawkins worked as a barber from the time of his arrival in 1890 until he passed the bar in 1895 and entered the legal profession.

The cooperation and assistance that was characteristic of earlier barbers continued throughout the period. J. R. Rogan hired J. E. Hawkins and I. W. Evans in 1890. Evans returned to work in Rogan's shop after his dismissal from the police force, and Clifford Hancock got his start as a porter there when he first came to town. In July of 1891 he borrowed \$400 from Mrs. Edith Rogan to outfit his "Golden

Gate Barbershop" at what was then 302 Third Avenue South. Charles F. Rhoades and Rogan worked together, as did Rhoades and Albert Thomas. James Gayles worked with Robert Dixon in the mid-1890s, and the list could go on.

Throughout the nineties there was competition among barbers. Black men were prevalent enough in the trade to prompt a white barber in Ballard to state his race in a jobseeking ad published in the October 1895 edition of the *Seattle Times*.

A few black men were included in the organization of the Journeyman Barber's Union in 1890. W. D. Highwarden and James Gayle were early members, and the latter served as secretary of the union at one time.

Much of the tension in the trade during the 1890s grew out of the fees charged by men with larger, more elegant "25 cents" shops, and the barbers of small shops who only charged fifteen cents. The time of organization occurred during a period when clerks in dry goods stores were rallying for Sunday closures and shorter workdays. Their concerns were not lost on the barbers, who voted for Sunday closures. Failure by some barbers to observe this measure resulted in hostilities and a few arrests, but all of this activity seems to have been peripheral to black barbers as only two belonged to the union at the time.

The most deplorable aspect of this business was the racial discrimination practiced against black people by black barbers. The men operating the larger, more elegant downtown shops were patronized exclusively by white clientele. The custom was based on the economics of a larger number of white men able to pay a higher price for services. Some of the men who held most rigidly to a discriminatory policy were active in church and community affairs, self-help organizations, and committees to negotiate the hiring of Blacks by white businesses. They also hired black barbers. During the late nineties, one such barber employed twenty-one other barbers, and another hired eighteen.

The discriminatory policy brought a great deal of criticism from members of the black community, while at the same time establishing a few black men as leading barbers in the city. Some individuals went beyond criticism. Black newspaper editors railed against such practices, some with scathing articles. In a 1900 editorial Mr. Cayton referred to one discriminating black barber as a "puke of the lowest ilk." He also tested the practice, thereby prompting a derisive article in a local publication, entitled, "A Colored Ass."<sup>26</sup> In January of 1895, his scuffle with a shop proprietor resulted in the breaking of a large plate glass window. Mr. Cayton was arrested for disorderly conduct. His contention was that the barber shop was a public place, and that he had a "perfect right in a public barber shop."<sup>27</sup>

The proprietor, in relating his story, spoke of the "gall" of Mr. Cayton to come to his shop when he had failed to repay him a long overdue \$10 debt, but in relating the incident to a *P.I.* reporter, he explained

Mr. Cayton's actions as calculated to bring a civil suit of discrimination against him for his refusal to shave a black man.<sup>28</sup>

In October of 1895, a Franklin miner took a black Seattle barber to court, citing a violation of his civil rights. At the hearing, the barber stated that he would indeed shave a black man, and that he declined the patronage of the plaintiff because of his reputation for being free with a gun, rather than because of his color. He also expressed the feeling that the complaining witness, by coming to his shop when he had formerly patronized a shop a block away, had the intention of damaging him in some way.

Mr. Eugene Harris came here to lead in the building of a church for the struggling Baptist congregation in 1899, but he found it necessary to utilize other skills in order to keep body and soul together. From 1899 until 1901 he operated a small stenography business. In April of 1901 he left for Tacoma where he had been promised work by several law firms, but returned after a few months when the promises fell through. Later that year he took the civil service examination for stenographer and moved to Walla Walla to serve as stenographer in the U.S. Land Office after placing first on the examination.

Some of the migrants had farming experience, but few pursued this occupation in Seattle. Daniel Myers operated a poultry farm at Sunnydale from the late 1890s until after the turn of the century. W. A. Scott's move to Kent was discussed earlier. A similar move from barbering was made by Frank Anderson after the turn of the century when he established a dairy on 21st Avenue, which he maintained for a few years. William Grose and his son, George, operated a truck farm after their move to their East Madison ranch.

Robert A. Clark and his wife Annie came to Seattle in the fall of 1889. He had published a newspaper in Little Rock, Arkansas before coming here. Until he could buy property, he worked at odd jobs as a laborer. In 1895 he opened a small dairy in the East Madison district which he conducted for three years. In 1898 he began drayage and delivery service, operating out of a space rented from a plumbing supply dealer on Second Avenue. By 1900 he was working out of his own office at Second near Madison Street.

The January 3, 1902 Special Edition of the *Seattle Republican* states that "no colored man in the Northwest has a better paying business" than Clark, and that the business "keeps six teams on the jump from eight o'clock in the morning until about the same time in the evening." Not only did Mr. Clark employ black teamsters, but he also gave some black women their first chance at office work after he expanded his business.

## LODGING HOUSE KEEPERS

The three beds enumerated in Manuel Lopes's sale of his furniture and house to Dexter Horton in 1859, indicates some likelihood that he rented beds in the 1850s. From that time on, black people were involved in supplying lodging. William Hedges had tenants but whether in quarters apart from his own, it is difficult to say. M. F. Monet expanded his restaurant-lodging house into a hotel by 1870. William Grose did likewise by 1883, and he also rented the houses on his property at Sixth and James Street after their construction in 1888. There are numerous examples of people taking boarders in their homes throughout the period of concern.

Lodging houses provided a means for several women to be self-sufficient in the 1890s. Mrs. Lucille Irving, Mrs. R. M. Gibson and Mrs. Finney ran such businesses, as did Mrs. Lucretia Roy with her husband. Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson earned enough from her boarding house during the Yukon and Alaska gold rushes to put her daughter Daisy through a private school.

## NEWSPAPERS AND EDITORS

Seattle had seven Aframerican weekly newspapers in the period from 1891 until 1901. Only copies of the *Seattle Republican* survive, but excerpts reprinted in the *Post-Intelligencer* and the *Times* from some of the other, more shortlived newspapers provide an idea of their editorial positions. Most of them were strongly partisan, which often gave rise to the charge that they were financed by one or the other political party. Their publishers were men who sought improvement in the lot of Aframericans above all else, whether in business or as private citizens. Uppermost in their positions was the defense of the rights of Blacks, and the continued advancement of the race.

## THE SEATTLE STANDARD

Brittain Oxendine was born in North Carolina in 1865. He and his wife, the former Elizabeth Grose, came to Seattle in 1889. Shortly after they came, he began work as janitor at the *P.I.* Early in 1891 Mr. Oxendine began publication of the *Seattle Standard*, a newspaper directly addressed to Aframerican interests in the Northwest. George Grose, I. I. Walker, and Gideon S. Bailey of Franklin also had interests in the newspaper. The newspaper plant was in the Kline and Rosenburg Building.



The *Standard* consisted of two pages of six columns each. While no known copies survive, an inventory details type faces, and printing material used, as well as the number of pages. Like most black newspapers of the era, the "uplift of the race" was of paramount interest, and the few surviving quotes reprinted in other newspapers tend to indicate a strong editorial stand on racial progress and recognition of black people by political parties.

The *Standard* faithfully supported the Republican party and took jabs at the Democrats, particularly black ones, reminding them of the broken promises of their party. In turn the *Seattle Telegraph*, the city's Democratic evening paper, occasionally made taunting remarks about the *Standard*. On one occasion it stated that the paper was backed by the Republican leaders of the county, and that it "fairly teems with brilliant compliments to the sage of Yarrow [*P.I.* editor L. S. Hunt] and friends of his political persuasion."<sup>30</sup>

From the first year the newspaper was beset with problems. In December of 1891, Dr. Burdett and Con Rideout brought a libel suit against it. The procedure grew out of the *Standard's* charge that the National Compact Masons, which the two men had recently organized, was "bogus."

By late 1892 the paper was in financial trouble. Various efforts were made to prolong its existence. A contest was launched to decide the most popular man in Washington and Oregon, as determined by the number of coupons clipped from the *Standard* and returned to it, bearing the name of the reader's preference. A gold-headed cane was awarded to the winner of the contest.

### HORACE CAYTON

About October of 1892 Oxendine leased the paper to Horace Cayton who had come to Seattle a few years earlier. Cayton was born a slave, the son of a slave and slavemaster's daughter, in Claiborne County, Mississippi in 1859.<sup>31</sup> After Emancipation his father, who came to own the plantation where he had been held in bondage, sent all of his children to school. Horace attended Alcorn College and studied with former United States Senator Hiram Revels for seven years. He spent time in Kansas and Utah prior to his arrival in the Northwest. Shortly after coming to Seattle in 1886 he worked as a political reporter for the *P.I.*<sup>32</sup> His first signed piece was a long letter written to the *P.I.* explaining the black man's loyalty to the Republican Party, while thoroughly denouncing organized labor in the process.

A few months after assuming editorship of the *Standard* Mr. Cayton began a series of attacks on state and local figures, including the governor and some of the city's founders. The articles so outraged some members of the Aframerican community that several prominent men met in Allen Garner's law office and drew up a set of resolutions to



Horace Cayton, born a slave, was a strong civil rights advocate, a staunch Republican, and a well-known newspaperman.

publicly disavow Cayton and his policies. The first resolution denounced such articles as "calculated to injure us as a race among our friends."<sup>33</sup> Among those signing the repudiation was former editor and publisher Oxendine.

There was talk of forming an opposition paper to counter Cayton's actions, but a more direct form of action was taken. After a visit from a community group, Oxendine went to Cayton, reminded him that his lease had expired, and asked him for return of the plant. Cayton's response was that Oxendine would have to regain it by legal process. To cut the argument short, Oxendine and four other men went to the office late that night and moved the printing equipment to the north end of town. Oxendine resumed the publication of the paper for the next month, then leased it to B.T. Lester, who was formerly in Mr. Cayton's employ. In October the entire plant was mortgaged to Frank Thomas, who later became a barber. How long the publication lasted after this is not known. But times were hard, and subscriptions were doubtlessly affected. Oxendine asked the 1893 A.M.E. Conference to pray for his newspaper, but indications are that it did not last beyond that year. By 1895 Oxendine was publishing the *Seattle Amusement Herald* from the Pioneer Building. Nothing is known of this publication, except for a short comment on racial trouble in Illinois, the Catholics and the

A. P. A., and the President's penchant for producing baby girls.<sup>34</sup> Sometime that year the Oxendines moved to Portland, and then to San Francisco.



Susie Revels Cayton was associate editor of the *Seattle Republican*.

In May of 1894, Horace Cayton presented the first issue of the *Seattle Republican* to the public. The *Post-Intelligencer* of May 24, 1894 remarked:

*A first is rarely a fair criterion of a publication, as inevitable difficulties must be overcome. Nevertheless, it gives excellent promise of success. The tone is manly, and its politics Republican, based upon an intelligent appreciation of party principles.*

This forceful voice for the rights of black people lasted 21 years, and was unwaveringly Republican.

Despite the *Republican's* partisanship, it never failed to question the party's refusal to recognize its black supporters. It demanded that the Republicans pursue a policy of equality because it "is just and right." Sometimes Cayton's observations were tinged with bitterness as he helplessly watched the disregard of the black man's civil rights here and nationwide. A strong believer in the New Negro, he lauded political and civic participation by members of the local black community. It was with pride that he reported this or that person serving on juries, or being considered for an appointment or nomination. He was a strait-laced, unremitting voice of temperance. "It carries no saloon advertisements" his masthead declared. His self-righteousness knew no bounds, and this often resulted in conflicts with members of the community. He is remembered by some today mostly for that strong trait. But people in the community also recognized his merit. In 1897 several black businessmen presented a silver urn to him in appreciation for all of his efforts on behalf of Aframericans.

Cayton published every letter that Democratic leader Con Rideout sent to the paper, whether from the National Black Democratic Convention, or on some local matter, but he never relented in his criticism of the man for his political beliefs. He did much to foment ostracism of black Democrats. He was also sarcastic toward those of Populist and Fusionist leanings, but he had grace enough to comment favorably upon appointments and nominations made by these groups, in light of consistent Republican failures to do so.

The *Republican's* front page carried national, and sometimes international reports. It was the only paper on the West Coast receiving telegraphic and cable news from both the *New York Sun* and the *New York World*. The chatty "Political Pot Pie" column discussed controversial issues and figures of the day. Cayton also printed articles from other places, usually written by persons known to him. Letters from Mrs. Rideout in South Africa were printed in the paper, as were those from persons in Alaska and the Yukon.

Advertisements were usually from white businesses, such as Dexter Horton Company Bank, Bonney and Stewart Undertakers, and Seattle Gas and Electric Company, as well as black barbers, contractors, restaurateurs, real estate agents, and the Buffalo Hump Gold Mining Company. The paper sold for five cents a copy, and subscriptions were \$2.00 a year throughout the period. No figures exist for subscriptions, but a constant plea for additional ones was made during the period of concern.

The paper was distributed each Saturday to black and white subscribers in Seattle and the King County mining areas, in Tacoma, Roslyn, and as far away as Spokane. A few were sent to some of the eastern states as well.

Some of Cayton's special editions survive. The earliest one, the January 4, 1896 *Special Edition*, is in journal format with pictures and

biographical sketches of prominent Aframericans in Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and Roslyn. It also lists prominent white Republicans in Seattle. Included is a special dispatch from the Atlanta Exposition written by Susie Sumner Revels, who later that year became his wife. There are reports that special editions were planned in memory of Frederick Douglass upon his death in 1895, and in an effort to assist the A.M.E. Church in defraying its debts in 1898.<sup>35</sup>

Much emphasis was placed on Aframerican progress and achievement here and elsewhere, and the exhortation to improve the status of the race by hard work, sobriety, land ownership, and education of the young was constant throughout the publication's existence. The newspaper often echoed the black community's concern with discrimination and unemployment, and reported on social activities of the black population in Seattle, Tacoma, Roslyn, Franklin and Newcastle.

For a few months in 1896 Cayton attempted a daily edition, but the effort died for lack of support. A few copies survive. He also secured the contract for the city's printing that year. But after a change in the city charter in 1900 which restricted contract holders to established dailies, he was no longer eligible for the position. He continued the solicitation of other printing jobs, however.

Cayton was joined on the paper by his wife, Susie, who became associate editor in 1900. Her assumption of the post in May of 1900 prompted the *Arlington Times* to banter: "We note that Susie Revels Cayton is new associate editor of the *Seattle Republican*. Is the associate editor the better half, Brer Cayton?"<sup>36</sup>

Susie Sumner Revels Cayton was an educated, capable woman who continued her writing career after her marriage to Horace Cayton. Her middle name "Sumner" was a tribute to the Massachusetts senator, Charles Sumner, who escorted her father, the first black U.S. Congressman, down the aisle for his swearing-in the year she was born. Mr. Revels was elected in 1870 to fill the Mississippi Senate seat formerly occupied by Jefferson Davis, ex-President of the Confederacy.<sup>37</sup>

Mrs. Cayton combined supervision of her household, which from time to time included one or two of her nieces and a Swedish maid, membership in various cultural activities and clubs, her work on the newspaper, and her own independent writing. Her story "Sally the Egg Woman" was published in the *Sunday Post-Intelligencer* June 3, 1900 edition. The Sydney, B.C. *Independent* wrote that she was "a writer of force and ability and she is making decidedly favorable impressions on the readers with her contributions to the literature of the day."<sup>38</sup>

In 1895 Mr. Cayton was arrested for libelling the Sheriff of Chehalis, after he was given erroneous information which he printed before checking the source. For this mistake he had a retraction published in the *P.I.*, and paid the costs incurred in the procedure.<sup>39</sup>

In 1901 Cayton was again arrested for libel. The arrest was said to be "one of the most sensational events of its kind that ever took place in

this city."<sup>40</sup> The arrest and trial grew out of several mocking statements made about the Chief of Police in the pages of the *Republican*, which culminated in Cayton's charge that the official was a grafter.

Cayton was arrested at home, carried to jail, locked up with a hobo and denied communication with a lawyer or friends at first. It was three o'clock in the morning before he was finally permitted to summon a friend to post bond, and secure his release. The public was outraged when the facts of the case became known. These events took place against a background of public sentiment which was largely against the prevalence of political corruption and vice in the city. At the time of the preliminary hearing of the case, the courtroom was packed with men from the entire spectrum of life in Seattle. The *P.I.* of May 21, 1901 says that up to this time "no case has attracted more attention from the public than this."

Between the editor's arrest and the trial the town was abuzz, lines were drawn, and sides were taken. The forces of right — the Law and Order League, ministers, and upstanding citizens in the greater community — took up his cause. So much controversy surrounded the case that by the time it came to court, the original cause of the trial was virtually forgotten. The issue had become whether or not Seattle was to continue as a wide-open town, tolerating the most blatant practices of prostitution, gambling, and official corruption, or settle down as a more sedate place.

The case, heard before one of the largest courtroom crowds ever assembled in Seattle, ended in a hung jury. Throughout the period between Cayton's arrest and trial, he continued his publication as though nothing unusual had happened. He still espoused support of the Republican Party, and he continued comment on the moral order of the city and county.

Although he mortgaged everything but his large printing press in 1898, his subscriptions and advertisements grew after the turn of the century, and he was ultimately to buy a large home with a carriage house on Capitol Hill. The family also had a Japanese servant.

Cayton became well-known in newspaper and political circles through his business. He was a delegate to the 1896 National Republican Convention, and a King County delegate to the State Press Association Convention in 1899.

The *Republican* continued throughout the period of concern, but it was not the lone voice of the time. In 1897 George E. Watkins came to Seattle from San Francisco where he had worked as a journalist. The first issue of his paper, *The Northwest Illuminator*, was introduced during October of that year. The *P.I.* thought of it as "promising much for the paper's future success."<sup>41</sup> The first few editions were issued monthly, then weekly. Although the initial edition announced the editor as "politically . . . without bias," a February, 1898 issue promoted the candidacy of Fusion politicians in a local campaign.<sup>42</sup>



### **An Important Announcement.**

#### **Seattle Daily Republican.**

The Republican begs to announce to its readers today (Friday) that it is starting in on a daily edition.

For some time past we have had such a step in view, and in consideration of the local conditions and the seeming lack of enterprise on the part of our afternoon contemporaries, we now aspire to be the leading afternoon daily in the entire state.

Our future efforts will have to speak for us, our space forbids further comment.

The *Seattle Daily Republican* was published for a few months during 1896.

Daniel Webster Griffin was one of the many men who moved from Franklin to Seattle. In 1898 he began the *Western Sun* which Cayton called a Fusion paper, bankrolled by that alliance in return for Griffin's promise to deliver the Franklin vote. After about a year he began issuing the *Negro World*. He announced his new paper through a prospectus released in the middle of August 1899, in which he promised that it would be "free from slander and unwise utterances concerning the condition of his race in the South, constantly taking the side of justice and conservatism . . . ." <sup>43</sup> This was an apparent jibe at the *Republican* which constantly expressed outrage against the inhuman treatment of the southern black population. After disagreement with some of the black men holding interest in this paper, Griffin began publication, apparently without assistance, of the *Seattle Bee* in 1900. He was later joined in this effort by G. S. Bailey, who became business manager.

John and Ella Ryan moved from Spokane to Seattle in the summer of 1900 with the intention of starting a newspaper here. A few numbers of the *Washington Exponent* were issued, but by late September the Ryans moved to Tacoma and continued publication there.

There were a variety of other small businesses operated on limited capital and probably with meager returns. A man listed in the 1891 census had a cigar store. S. B. White ran a grocery store in 1889, Henry Todd was a junk dealer during the 1890s. Robert R. Brown had a blacksmith shop on what is now Westlake Avenue from 1889 until he went North to prospect about 1900. Edward Morrison had a blacksmith shop in the early 1890s. George Grose was in the real estate business for a brief period during 1900. J. D. Jones maintained a woodyard at Second and University in the late 19th century, moving it to Eighth and Madison in 1901. J. D. Moore was a familiar figure on Beacon Hill and other parts of town where he drove his ice cream wagon singing the



virtues of his "hokey pokey" in the late 1880s.<sup>44</sup> King Solomon, the fortune teller, "Kidnapped from the island of Madagascar," would tell the fortunes of those in need of his service.

Mrs. Irene Francis Woodson ran a cigar store during the turn of the century. Her son, Fred, recalls:

*She opened before any other cigar store and she transacted enough business to close the shop by the time the next cigar store had opened. At that time the business was all walk-in trade and the Pioneer Square area was the center of all activities.<sup>45</sup>*

Mrs. Woodson assisted her husband, Zacharias, in operating rooming houses during the first three decades of this century.

William H. Jackson worked as a laborer the first couple of years following his arrival in Seattle. In 1894 he became a housemover and continued this business until 1907. He formed a partnership with E. W. Jones for about ten years. In 1909 he established a contracting business for house construction.

Despite difficulties in obtaining rental spaces for businesses, several people obtained locations handy to transportation and to the public. After the Fire, and from about 1890 N. F. Butts, T. C. Collins and Brittain Oxendine rented space in the Kline and Roseberg Building at Second and Cherry for their barber shop, real estate and employment office, and newspaper plant, respectively. From 1901 Ed Hawkins and Andrew Black had their office suites in the Pacific (now Interurban) Building until their deaths in 1912 and 1918.

Black people operated businesses "below the line," in the red-light district, also. At the entrance to Morning Star Alley, part of the White-chapel District, there were various ethnic vendors of food, among them a black man whose name is unrecorded. He was reported in 1890 to have a brisk business selling clam chowder and crackers for a dime, frankfurters on rye bread for the same, corn for five cents, and a variety of relishes and condiments for different prices.<sup>46</sup>

### **A New Paper.**

**Seattle is to have another paper. At first it will be a monthly publication, later a weekly. It is to be called the "Northwest Illuminator," and is to be edited by George E. Watkins, a colored man, who comes from San Francisco. The first number will be out next month.**

The *Northwest Illuminator*, established in 1897, was the third newspaper begun by a black person in Seattle.

"Denver Ed" Smith became the prosperous owner of a big saloon after his retirement from boxing in the mid-90s. Richard Roman did well with the Blue Front Saloon at Sixth and King Street. It was located over the tideflats in those days, but many black and white people of low economic standing frequented the place for drinks, and to dance the quadrille in the dance hall at the back. When he sold the fixtures and furniture in 1893, he was paid \$2400 for them, a substantial sum for those Depression times.

Aframericans enjoyed modest success in their small businesses in Seattle. A few did exceedingly well. William Grose's holdings were estimated at \$250,000 in 1891. William Hedges's fortune was in the land he owned. John F. Cragwell's two hotel barber shops were valued at a total of \$6000 in 1900. These were exceptional cases. Most businesses remained small one-person, or family operations.

The earliest businesses were centered around skills readily identified with the training Blacks received as slaves — cooking, barbering, and shoemaking. From the 1870s, new skills were put to use — management of hotels, small stores, employment agencies, hotel dining rooms, building and construction firms, and publishing newspapers.

All businesses during the territorial period were wholly dependent on white clientele. By the close of the Victorian period, a few businesses had emerged which were supported almost wholly by Blacks. In particular, these were some small barber shops, a few lodging houses, and two or three recreation halls.

Some of the businesses begun in the nineties became firmly established after the turn of the century. They provided an affluent life for their owners and work for other members of the community. Most, however, remained small. Those surviving the trial period of their first two or three years made an income sufficient to take care of their families in reasonable comfort.

## 4 Professions

*One man wins success by his words;  
another gets his due reward by the  
work of his hands.*

Proverbs 12:20

The cooperation between businessmen was reflected among professionals. It is most clearly seen among members of the legal profession. Help ranged from motions for admission to the bar to sharing lodging or office space.

Most of the black lawyers in Seattle until 1901 came with certificates from other places. Except for one, Edward Hawkins, they were all single men. Without exception they were born in other parts of the country. Mostly southern, they came as practicing attorneys from their resident states. In Seattle, several became active in politics.

Robert O. Lee, the first black man admitted to the Washington State Bar, was granted his certificate on March 20, 1889. After graduating from the Columbia Law School in South Carolina, he took a post graduate law course at Badden Institute in North Carolina. Following his graduation from Badden he moved to Springfield, Illinois, where he was admitted to practice in the Superior Court, but shortly afterward left law practice to operate a newspaper which failed.

The record does not reveal how long Lee stayed in Seattle or what his successes or failures were, but by early 1891 Allen Garner was the only black lawyer in the city. Even less is known about Mr. Garner than Mr. Lee prior to his coming to Seattle, but he is mentioned in court cases by 1891. In addition to his practice, civil and criminal, he was also active in Republican politics. In February 1892, he made motion for admission to the bar of James A. Scott who had practiced in the Chancery Court of Mississippi. Mr. Scott shared his office space at 612 Second Street in

1892. Mr. Garner married Miss Annie Jackson in 1893, and moved to San Francisco two years later.

Conrad Rideout came to Seattle in 1891, as advance agent for a group of 60 wealthy farmers from Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas who were seeking to emigrate to the Northwest. There is no evidence that this move actually took place. An Ann Arbor University graduate, Rideout was elected to the Arkansas legislature as a Democrat for two terms beginning in 1882. During the 1890s his law office was located first in the Roxwell Building which was located at the northeast corner of First Avenue and Columbia, and later in the Occidental Building at Yesler, Second and James Streets.

On August 29, 1898 he married Mrs. May B. Mason, a widow, who had recently returned from the Klondike with \$5000 in gold dust. Throughout Mr. Rideout's stay in Seattle, his ambitions for political



J. Edward Hawkins, first black man to pass the bar without prior certification elsewhere, studied law for five years while working full time as a barber.

office were frustrated. The combination of a wealthy wife and continuous thwarting of his political ambitions led to his departure to South Africa in October of 1899. Mr. and Mrs. Rideout and Miss Pearl Mason, Mrs. Rideout's daughter, sailed from New York to Liverpool on the second voyage of the steamship "Oceanic," being the first Aframerican persons to sail on that ship.<sup>1</sup> The only explanation proffered at the time was that Mr. Rideout was going to Capetown to attend to business for a syndicate which he represented.<sup>2</sup> One of the local rumors was that he went to South Africa to lay groundwork for a republic which A.M.E. Bishop Turner hoped to establish there as part of his Back-To-Africa Emigration Plan.

In South Africa Mr. Rideout travelled around the country, and Miss Pearl worked as a schoolteacher.<sup>3</sup> They remained there for about two years, but Mrs. Rideout returned to Seattle in May of 1900 because of a fever contracted there.

John Edward Hawkins came to Seattle in 1890 and worked as a barber with Robert Dixon for five years. Throughout most of that period he studied law. On May 18, 1895 he was admitted to practice before the King County Bar, the first black person to be admitted in this state without prior certification elsewhere.

Hawkins was born in Galesburg, Illinois in 1866 and attended the public schools there. After leaving Knox College in his freshman year, he travelled around the country before coming first to San Francisco and then Seattle.

Because his place of work was in a building which housed various law offices, he became acquainted with some of the attorneys, and began the study of law with Judge Isaac M. Hall and W. A. Slater, and was assisted by others.

After standing on his feet at least ten hours a day, six and a half days a week, Ed Hawkins went home to study such subjects as the U.S. Constitution, the Washington Code, *Evidence* by Greenleaf, *Equity Jurisprudence* by Stanz, Blackstone's *Real Property* and Cooley's *Constitutional Limitations*.<sup>4</sup> By the time of his formal admission to the bar he had already practiced occasionally in the lower courts of certain justices and the municipal judge.

His first business location was with Con A. Rideout, and they worked on several cases together. One of the best known of the period was the defense of Willie Holmes, a Franklin, Washington miner convicted and sentenced to death for the fatal shooting of another miner. Largely through their efforts the case became known statewide, although their efforts to have the sentence commuted were unsuccessful. Mr. Holmes died before his hanging date.

One of the favorite pastimes of idle workingmen and curious spectators of the nineties was attendance in court. The minor courts were often the setting for the exposure of family skeletons, and small scandals, and were a never-ending source of fascination for some classes of

the population. Hawkins played to this handy audience as a new struggling lawyer.

It was here that Ed Hawkins first attracted a following. He was a favorite of the regular crowd throughout the early days of his practice. His eloquence, his gestures, and his humor were well-known both inside and outside the courtrooms.

Hawkins's cases were both civil and criminal, many of the latter involving people from the sporting world. Yet his was one of the strongest voices for civil rights during the closing years of the 19th century. Time and again he defended black people's rights of admission to public baths, restaurants and theaters. Undaunted by several awards of \$1 damages to clients bringing suits against restaurants, his reply was, "It's the principle, not the damages that we're after."<sup>5</sup>

From the 1890s until his death in 1912, Hawkins and his wife, Etta, were members of Seattle's black middle class which consisted of a small group of professionals and a few persons in the well-paid service trades.

James P. Ball, Jr. was admitted to practice in the superior courts of Washington on January 7, 1895. He was admitted on a certificate from the Supreme Court of Montana, where he returned to practice in the latter part of the year. He first came to Seattle in 1892, assisting in his family's photography business. Settling down to permanent residence in Seattle in the late 1890s, his business grew steadily over the years. He advertised in local papers, and his ad was listed in the *Seattle Times* as late as 1921.

### **J. P. BALL, Jr.**

**Practices in all State and U S. Courts**

**Rooms 18, 17, 16 Roxwell Block, Seattle, Wash.**

Advertisement for Attorney Ball, 1901.

Howard University graduate, Andrew R. Black, took a post-graduate course at a New York Law School before he came to Seattle in the spring of 1901 and passed the bar exam in June of 1901. He was born in Kent County, Virginia in 1878 and graduated from the Virginia Normal School and Collegiate Institute where he taught for three years. For his first six months in practice he shared office space in J. E. Hawkins's suite in the Pacific Building which stands at the southeast corner of Yesler and Occidental. By the end of the year his business was large enough to require additional space and he moved to his own suite on the same floor as Hawkins. His practice thrived and he was able to give some black women their first opportunity at office work.

The first mention of a black doctor in Seattle is in the First Methodist Church marriage records of 1880. He was Dr. Joshua Rysnowden and he does not appear in any other sources. Dr. Charles Shadd and his



Attorney Andrew Black had offices in the Interurban Building from 1901 until his death in 1918.

wife, Flora, who lived across the street from the A.M.E. Church from 1891 to 1892, are mentioned in several accounts of social activities during those years, but apparently their stay was limited to that time. Except that both of them were born in Pennsylvania, there is very little known about them.

Although Dr. E. E. Makiell, an ordained minister of the African Methodist Church and a medical doctor, appears to have spent some time in Seattle during the nineties, it would be 14 years before another black doctor would establish a practice here.<sup>6</sup>

The ministers and pastors who came to Seattle were educated men, with experience in administration and education. Some led the churches in progressive pursuits, such as taking an active role in organizing and supporting groups seeking the amelioration of some of the problems facing black people on a day-to-day basis. Others were more old-fashioned, possibly more singleminded, with their energies diverted to otherworldly pursuits. In general they were well thought of in the community and, with a few notable exceptions, got along well with



**James A. Scott, a colored attorney, on notion of Allen A. Garner, was yesterday admitted to practice upon a certificate from the chancery court of Mississippi.**

Professionals assisted each other. Scott's first business location was with Allen Garner.

their congregations and the community as a whole. The Baptist ministers were of southern origin and ranged in education from literate to a Fisk University professor. The Methodist ministers were of northern and southern origin and their educational attainments were similar to those of the Baptists. Some encouraged the more demonstrative forms of worship and others did not. Some were strongly fundamentalist in views and practices while others were of a more flexible nature.

All of the pastors of the Victorian Era had completed their theological training elsewhere before coming to Seattle. Seaborn Collins, who became presiding elder of the A.M.E. Church in Washington and Oregon by 1900, should be mentioned in this connection. A communicant since his youth in Georgia, he was ordained deacon in Seattle in 1896. Continuing his studies while working fulltime as a carpenter, he passed his examinations and was ordained minister about 1898. He pastored churches in Franklin, Roslyn, Tacoma and Spokane during the period.

Dr. Samuel Burdett came to Seattle some years after his resignation from the Army. This Kentucky native began his military career as a private serving only 20 days before promotion to corporal. He served during the last two years of the Civil War, primarily with the Army of the James. He became a member of the 9th Cavalry in 1866 and remained a part of it until his resignation in 1883.

Dr. Burdett operated a veterinary practice from 1891 until after the turn of the century. Although he suffered severely from arthritis, he coupled other interests with his practice in the latter part of the period, such as a mining and loan company he headed in 1900 and short-lived insurance and benefit agencies during the 1890s. He was mentioned as a possible appointee for the \$1000 a year City Veterinary Surgeon post in 1900, but the position was awarded to a white appointee instead.

In the late 19th century professionals relied heavily on Aframerican support. In the ministry there was no white competition, and a guaranteed economic base. In the other fields there was not only more numerous white competition, but a far less dependable source of income as most black people did not require lawyers, and the administration of home remedies for persons and animals was a prevalent practice, which limited the need for doctors. Nevertheless, some of the professionals, particularly lawyers, were successful enough to buy large comfortable homes, and send their wives and children on annual vacations to the mountains and lakeshore.

## 5 Property

*Property was easy to come by those days . . . if you had any cash, but nobody had any cash. That was the problem. That's what killed off most of the property owners here early . . . . The taxes were so high, and no work at all.*

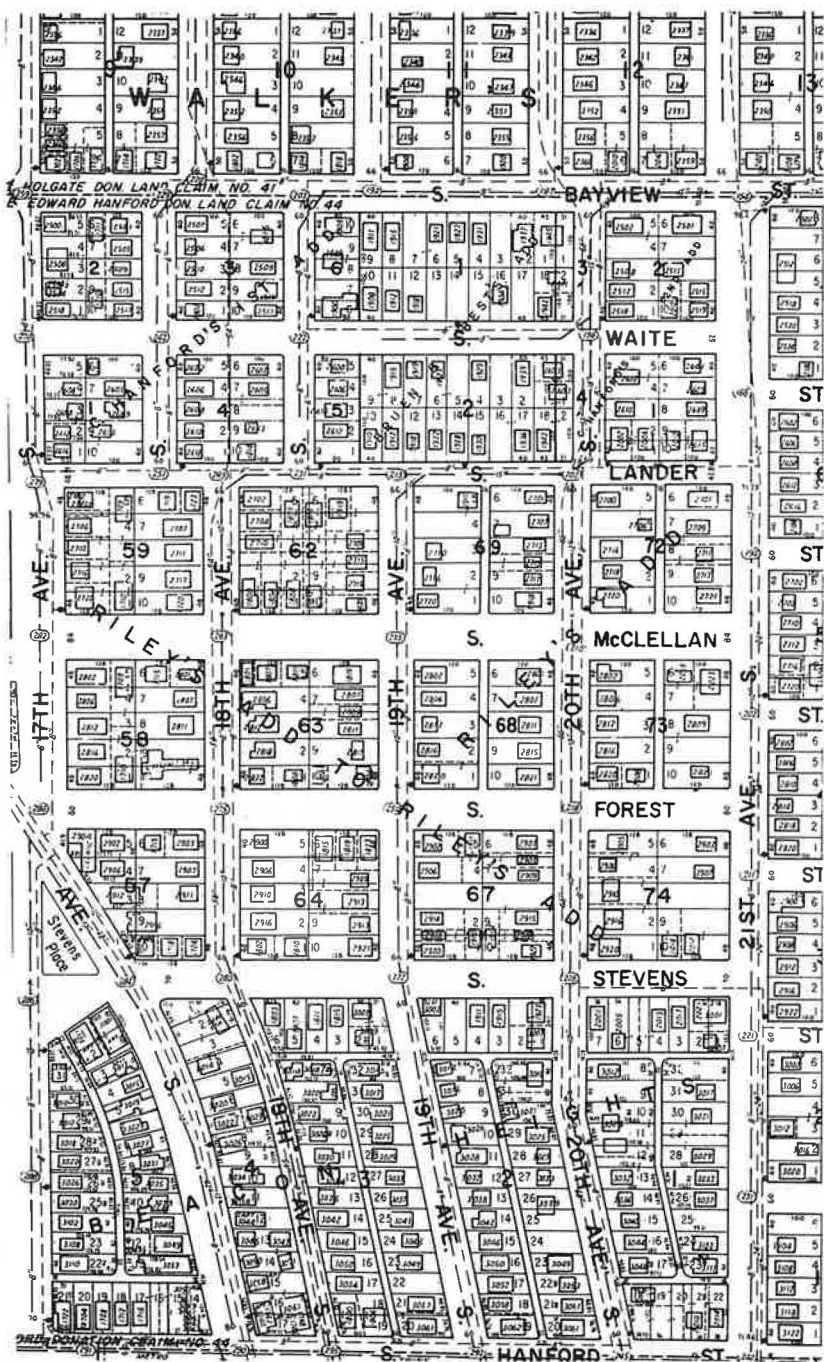
Mattie Vinyerd Harris  
July 17, 1975

Black residents of Seattle acquired property soon after their arrival here. Much of the land is extremely valuable today, as ownership was usually in what are now commercial districts, or residential areas of high property values. In other cases, the size of the holdings, alone, would be worth several million dollars today. As the number of Blacks increased, so did their ownership in a wider area. Most of the land-owners of the 1860s lived in the Pioneer Square district, but from the 1870s some people lived in areas outside of the downtown section.

Cyclical depressions occurred from the late 1860s through the 1890s. Land was the safest investment for a working person living in times of economic instability, so people involved themselves in numerous transactions. Their status did not preclude their interest in such ownership, and the porter in a shop was as likely as the shop owner to acquire land.

The record does not reveal the details of Manuel Lopes's transaction in obtaining the lot where his little white house stood, but he was the first black property owner in Seattle. He sold his lot in 1865 for \$50.<sup>1</sup>

By the middle of the 1860s, names of resident Aframericans are to be found in almost every volume of deed records covering the period. At times the entries are brief, taking up part of a page to record the parties to the sale, the date, the amount of money involved (most often stated in gold coin), and a description of the property.



At other times the entries take up several pages, as in the deed of property purchased by the Workingmen's Joint Stock Association of Portland, Oregon.<sup>2</sup> Memoranda of "Files and Proceedings" of property in probate were also lengthy at times.

Usually, certain names appeared repeatedly in the early volumes, extending from a person's first transaction to probate proceedings upon his death. The name of William Hedges soon becomes familiar to anyone going through the first six volumes of the King County deed books. In the last few years of his life, he diligently acquired property. During the territorial period he was by far the largest black land owner of property now in the city. He bought property from individuals, and at public auctions, and he usually sold land at a profit. His first purchase was made about 1864.

In 1865 Hedges traded the east half of the lot at the northwest corner of Fourth Avenue South, facing on Washington Street, for 47 acres at Green Lake. He also leased fractions of lots in the downtown section. In 1869 he bought four acres of land which are now bounded on the north by Pike, the south by Union, the east by Broadway, and the west by Harvard Avenue East.<sup>4</sup> Old Fire House Number 25 occupies part of this site today. That same year he granted a four year lease on the lot now occupied by Upstart Crow and Company for, what was then, the fabulous sum of \$1320.<sup>5</sup> All of these transactions he signed with an X.

Mr. Hedges came to Seattle about 1864, probably as a fugitive from slavery. Census records list his birthplace as Washington, D.C., and his age in 1870 as 52. He had five children, all of whom lived in Baltimore County, Maryland during his residence in Seattle.

At the time of his death in 1871, only two of his children were still alive, a son Phillip and a daughter Elizabeth (Ellen) Hedges Thomas, both in Baltimore County. According to a will mentioned in the Probate Court Records, Mr. Hedges left his property to his wife (whose death in 1865 was unknown to him), his three sons, and one daughter.<sup>6</sup> He was also unaware of the deaths of two of his sons, one at the Fairfax, Virginia Courthouse during the Civil War, and the other after being knocked from a steamboat into Chesapeake Bay.

This loss of contact with family members prior to Emancipation was not unusual. From the late 1860s through the close of the century, black newspapers ran ads seeking the location of people's kind from whom they had been separated in slavery. Being illiterate and so far away from them, Mr. Hedges had completely lost touch.

The practice of the Probate Court at the time of his death was to give notice of the impending sale of property of deceased persons by publishing it in four successive issues of the *Weekly Intelligencer*. This was

[facing page] This 1978 Kroll map shows the twelve-block tract named after George Riley. It was purchased by the Workingman's Joint Stock Association in 1869 and 1870.

done in order to give persons interested in the estate a chance to object to such a sale. The initial announcement of death usually ended with such statements as "New York papers take notice," "New Jersey papers take notice," etc., in the hopes that newspapers of a deceased person's home state would pick up the news and publish it, thus notifying next of kin in distant places, who had not been notified otherwise.

Just how or when the Hedges heirs learned of their father's death is not known, but the first instance of their involvement in transactions involving their inheritance is not recorded until 1876. They continued to sell their Seattle property until the mid-nineties, but none of them ever lived here.

Hedges's larger parcels of land were sold at auction to meet debt claims against his estate.<sup>7</sup> The 47-acre parcel at Green Lake was sold for \$265. The four acres at Capitol Hill went for \$440. A 59 acre tract in Tacoma was also sold at this time.

The Hedges heirs remained in Maryland, selling their inheritance piece by piece until 1894 when a law suit was brought to resolve an ownership claim to the lot at the northwest corner of Fourth Avenue at Washington Street.<sup>8</sup> At the time of this suit in January of 1895 the 120 feet facing on Washington was reported to be "easily worth \$50,000."<sup>9</sup> By now more aware of the value of real estate in Seattle, the heirs contested the suit, claiming that their father had never sold the eastern half of the lot. But they lost the suit after evidence was presented in court that substantiated the owner's claim of possession for 25 years. Among those testifying was Judge McGilvra who, at the time of the transaction, was the only lawyer in Seattle. He swore that he drew up the deed between the parties. The original purchaser, who had traded the Green Lake property to Mr. Hedges, testified that he eventually sold the property. The second buyer stated that he would risk not paying the recording fee, which led to all the trouble later. Annoyed by this procedure, Mr. Hedges said the deed was no good to anyone, took it and threw it in the stove.

Another man without family here was John D. Closson. He came to Seattle about the same time as Mr. Hedges, and worked at odd jobs. In 1869 he paid William Hedges \$500 for a quarter of a lot which is now the northwestern corner of Occidental Park.<sup>10</sup> His sole heir was a relative, Abigail Closson, of Monmouth County, New Jersey. She mortgaged this 30 by 60 foot plot for \$1200 in 1875.<sup>11</sup>

In 1866 M. F. Monet bought 17 acres on Lake Union which are now bordered by Dexter Avenue on the west, Westlake Avenue North and Lake Union on the east, Highland Drive on the south and Galer Street on the north.<sup>12</sup> Five years later he sold this property, but retained the First Avenue South property on which his hotel stood.<sup>13</sup> At present some of the parcel belongs to the Federal government, and some is occupied by miscellaneous businesses, oil storage tanks, a parking lot, railroad tracks, and piers.

Joseph Champion moved to Victoria after buying half of a lot near Pioneer Square from Horace Butler in 1869.<sup>14</sup> He bought a second lot from William Hedges in 1870 on Second Avenue West between Republican and Harrison Streets.<sup>15</sup> In his will of March 1871 he left his property to his friend, Arthur Strong, a Victoria, B.C. garbage man.<sup>16</sup>

In 1889 S. J. Collins bought two lots on Magnolia Boulevard.<sup>17</sup> Allen Deans bought six lots in Kirkland in 1891.<sup>18</sup> Dr. Sam Burdett held the mortgage on property in West Seattle in 1894.<sup>19</sup>

The death of Charles Cassen, who was known here as William Black in the eighties, caused a stir when his property was reported by the *P.I.* to be valued at over \$15,000 in 1889.<sup>20</sup> Not only was the case of interest because of the value of the property, but also because Mr. Cassen lived and acquired property under an assumed name, and died without a will. His identification was ultimately cleared to the Probate Court's satisfaction. His brother-in-law, William H. Jackson, of New York was appointed administrator of the estate which was bequeathed to Mr. Cassen's only surviving heir, his sister, Amy C. Jackson.<sup>21</sup> The Jacksons became permanent Seattle residents.

From the early 1840s, Afamericans held periodic conventions in northern and western states to formulate ways of "uplifting the race," and to devise means of freeing them from discrimination, poverty, and menial status in the society. Sometimes they came together to address a specific issue such as their opposition to African Colonization, or to consider emigration from California in the 1850s. At other times they addressed more general concerns. During some of the conventions, banks and saving institutions were formed, as were joint stock companies.

### GEORGE RILEY AND BEACON HILL

In 1869 fifteen Portland, Oregon residents, including two women, formed the Workingmen's Joint Stock Association which had as its main purpose the pooling of funds for the purchase of real estate to be divided proportionately.

Their president, George P. Riley a native of Boston, was dispatched to Washington Territory to search for suitable property. Mr. Riley and several other men had passed through Puget Sound country en route to Oregon from the Canadian Northwest Territory gold fields.<sup>22</sup> In August of 1869 the Association purchased the eastern half of the 20-acre Hanford Donation Claim on Beacon Hill for \$2,000 gold coin.<sup>23</sup> This original purchase, presently embracing the four blocks bordered by South Forest and South Lander, between 19th and 21st Avenues South, was legally given the name "Riley's Addition to South Seattle." Two years later the second purchase, totaling eight more blocks, was designated "Riley's Addition to Riley's Addition to South Seattle."<sup>24</sup> The 1978 Kroll plat map of Beacon Hill in this section depicts the corporation's hold-





George Riley, pictured about 1870, bought property on Beacon Hill for the Workingmen's Joint Stock Association, of which he was president.

ings. It bears George Riley's name, and the streets which were granted to the city in 1871 by the Association.

Water lots, which are now solid land due to fill from sluicing of Seattle's hills, were also purchased by members.<sup>25</sup> They owned 15 lots in what is now the vicinity of First Avenue South and Lander Street. Individual members of the Association also purchased land about half a mile east of Freeland on Whidbey Island.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the hard times during much of the early seventies, the Association members managed to hang on to their land. Following the imposition of the school tax in 1871, most of the members had levies against their property ranging from \$.08 to \$.30 per parcel. Under the watchful eye of Mr. Riley, most of them paid their taxes, and some of them sold their land for a profit. But some of it was lost for taxes in the succeeding years as the assessments increased, and depressions re-occurred. George Wright, grandson of George Riley, says:

*They were just working people. You know what employment was back in those days, and they just naturally couldn't keep up the taxes and assessments on it, not in those days, and little by little they lost it.<sup>27</sup>*

Some of the Association's members could not write their names. Only Phillip Francis and John Donaldson moved to Seattle. Despite illiteracy,



distance, and lowpaying jobs, plus unemployment during hard times, members were able to hold on to a surprising amount of their property. Part of the property went to the state upon the death of some of the Association members who had no heirs, or whose heirs failed to claim the estate. Upon his death in 1889, Phillip Francis was survived by a brother and a sister in Jamaica, but neither of them ever claimed any part of his estate.<sup>28</sup> Mr. Wright built a six-room house on the last remaining lot of George Riley's holdings in 1911.<sup>29</sup> This house on the 2700 block of 21st Avenue South still stands.

Although Phillip Francis lost a nine lot parcel in 1876 for failure to pay a \$6.39 assessment on the property in accordance with the school tax law, he sold part of his considerable holding from time to time, and still owned a great deal of property in Whatcom and Snohomish Counties and on Whidbey Island and Beacon Hill at the time of his death in 1889.<sup>30</sup>

Economic depressions dealt severe blows to property owners. Even the Association was unable to save some members' land. Tax levies were announced in local newspapers. Failure to read the notices could mean heavy losses. Charles Gilbert lost seven lots on which he owed 42 cents in 1877.<sup>31</sup> They were purchased at auction for \$2.70.<sup>32</sup> Following his death, all 19 of George Luveney's lots were sold for \$4.45 in 1877.<sup>33</sup> Much of the Association's property was bought at auction by Thaddeus Hanford who had originally sold it to them.

One year after receiving his quit claim deed, and following a report of delinquent tax, Association member John Donaldson, in 1874, sold all of his remaining holdings of seven lots for \$150.<sup>34</sup>

Mattie Vinyerd Harris remembers discussions about the loss of property in earlier times:

*Property was easy to come by those days . . . if you had any cash, but nobody had any cash. That was the problem. That's what killed off most of the property owners here . . . The taxes were so high, and no work at all.*<sup>35</sup>

Most of the Association members continued their residence in Portland, gradually selling their remaining Beacon Hill property.

Just when Aframericans became residents of Beacon Hill could not be ascertained, but when Brittain and Lizzie Oxendine came to Seattle in January of 1889, they moved into a house on 11th Avenue South, then called "B" Street, joining Aframericans already in the area.<sup>36</sup> Several Blacks also lived in houseboats on water lots at the foot of Beacon Hill. Among these were Joseph and Belle Bennett, who were lodging with Mr. Bennett's Jamaican countryman, Ben Angelle, and his wife.

There were other large property owners who should be mentioned for the record. Although no other source mentions him, Z.D. Clapon is

listed in the 1870 Federal census as holding real estate valued at \$2500. And John A. Conna satisfied the requirements for ownership of a 160 acre homestead near Auburn in 1890.<sup>37</sup>

### WHERE BLACKS LIVED

Because the holdings of Aframericans were so widely scattered over what became the city of Seattle, it is difficult to assess whether or not they met discrimination in their attempts to buy property. But it is worth noting that where one bought property, within a short period of time, others bought in the same area. This tendency was apparent as early as the 1860s when William Hedges and M.F. Monet bought lots between Second and Fourth Avenues West, bordered by Harrison and Republican Streets.<sup>38</sup> It was repeated again when Archy Fox bought a lot at 6th and James, and William Grose made a similar purchase five months later on the same block.<sup>39</sup>

The development of the Madison Street settlement is the best example of this inclination. After 1889 black people lived along Madison as far west as 10th Avenue, and as far east as 30th Avenue. From the early 1890s they were sprinkled throughout the area from Columbia on the South to Denny on the North. A few were even further afield. By 1894 the Robert R. Brown family was living on 26th Avenue East, south of Lee Street. In 1901 Henry Gregg and his wife lived at 24th Avenue East and Aloha Street. About five families lived in the vicinity of 26th and Dearborn from 1891. After the Fire the Freeman family lived at 12th and Yesler, but most homeowners lived within three or four blocks of Madison. Few adjoining lots were owned by separate families, so the idea of a colony could only be used in the broadest sense of their residence within the area oriented towards Madison for their religious and social life, as well as for transportation. They were always outnumbered by white people, even when the area was sparsely settled.

Others lived in lodging or apartment houses run by either black or white persons. Several persons in the 1890s, including the late Peter DeBow, found rooms at the boarding house of Mrs. Lucille Irving on Cherry Street between Second and Third Avenues. After the turn of the century, Zacharias and Irene Frances Woodson rented rooms to many newcomers at their downtown lodging houses. A few present day residents, including Mary Ott Sanders, recall finding their first Seattle lodging in the Woodson Building at 12th and Pike a few years after our period of concern.<sup>41</sup>

Certain employees lived at the place of their employ. This was particularly true of the Rainier Hotel workers, and in territorial days, it was a



Seaborn and Alzada Collins were the first black people to move to East Madison. House pictured about 1895.

customary practice of other hotel employees. Some servants also lived in quarters provided by their employers, probably similar to those "backstairs" at the Joshua Green House, when the employers were affluent.

There is evidence that the earliest Aframerican settlers in and around Seattle shared living quarters. Such arrangements probably grew out of difficulties in finding housing, as well as the willingness to assist newcomers.

The bill of sale of Manuel Lopes's restaurant-barber shop in 1859 lists three beds among the furnishings.<sup>42</sup> It is unknown whether the two extra beds accommodated regular tenants, or occasional ones. Robert Dixon worked in Lopes's shop during his first visit here, and he probably slept on the premises.

William Hedges is mentioned as landlord to a black person in an 1870 newspaper account, and the 1870 census lists four unrelated people sharing a house. Robert Dixon was a resident of the Our House Hotel in 1883, as was William Davis, who was one of the hotel's cooks.<sup>43</sup>

There were, however, little pockets of a few adjoining houses elsewhere occupied by Aframericans, such as on South Weller Street, the Grose houses at 6th and James, a few houses at 6th and Cherry, and a couple of houses near the African Methodist Church.

At the turn of the century, a small group of individuals made purchases and built homes in the Green Lake area in close succession.

Aframericans sold land to each other. This practice dates back to the 1860s when M.F. Monet, Joseph Champion, and others bought land from William Hedges. Allen Deans sold two lots to David Fletcher in the East Madison District in 1887. Seaborn J. Collins sold his two Magnolia Boulevard lots to Allen Deans in 1891.



Looking west from 33rd Avenue towards Grose family homestead, 24th Avenue between Howell and Olive. Note YMCA and Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, upper left. 1980.

number of homeowners lived in the area adjoining Madison Street from 1890, attention is concentrated there.

It was a long way from downtown to the vicinity of 20th and Madison in territorial days. Except for Henry Yesler's farm, most of the area was heavily wooded. When the Madison Street cable car was installed in 1889, bears still inhabited part of the area, and until a short while before the laying of tracks, lovers still met at the big rock near the corner of what is now 10th and Madison.<sup>50</sup>

In 1882 William Grose purchased a 12 acre tract from Henry Yesler for \$1000 in gold.<sup>51</sup> In the succeeding years others would buy in the general area. Allen Deans in 1887, S.J. Collins, David Fletcher and Isaac Evans in 1888, Walter Washington, James Blocker and Charles Harvey in 1889, and enough during the 1890s to cause at least some people to

think of the area as a "colony of colored people." But settlement was sparse until well after the turn of the century.

The first Aframerican family to move to the East Madison district was Seaborn and Alzada Collins and their son, William, who was called Jasper. In 1888 Mr. Collins, a mechanic and carpenter, built a two-story house valued at \$1000 on the west side of 28th Avenue, just north of Madison.<sup>52</sup> Following the destruction of his hotel-saloon business in the Seattle Fire, William Grose moved to the land which he had previously used as a ranch.

The Madison district continued to be "out in the country" for several years after the turn of the century. Not only was it heavily wooded and sparsely settled in the early 1890s, but its whole appearance was vastly different from what it looks like today. Fortunately some written descriptions survive, principally, as part of the Afro-American Collection in the University of Washington's Manuscripts and Archives Collection. The most graphic account is part of a letter written by Lizzie Grose Oxendine to her nephew William Dixon and his wife Hazel Johnson Dixon of Seattle, describing the area in 1891:

*In March we moved into our house on what was McLane Street — at that time only a road. There were no streets, just roads and trails. Our lot was near the corner of Division Street, now East Union . . . . By this time quite a lot of colored families had come to Seattle and had bought lots and had built homes. Times were good, everyone found work.*

*This year George Grose built his cottage on 23rd Avenue . . . . It was just a road, for Madison was the only street that was graded. There was nothing but roads and trails through fallen trees, stumps and underbrush. No street lights. When we went to church at night we carried our lanterns. He [William Grose] also built the house on Massalon Street [24th Avenue] on the lot he bought in order to give him an outlet to the street. The old homestead was not on any street but stood in the orchard at this time. The 12 acres was intact. There was no street running through at all.<sup>53</sup>*

Part of this tract was occupied by descendants of William Grose until the mid-1970s.

The Grose family lived closer together than did other people, although they were not next door to each other. George Grose lived on 23rd and Olive Street near his parents. His sister, Lizzie Oxendine, and her husband, Brittain, bought property from William Grose, near 25th and Union Street.

Mattie Vinyerd Harris, in speaking of her parents' consideration of purchasing land in the district during the 1890s, recalls:

*My father wanted to buy out here on 19th Avenue. There was a great big area that they were trying to sell, and my mother says, "No, indeed, you'll never have my children eaten up by bears." I think she was exaggerating, but there was an awful lot of green trees and the trees were big here . . . timber. You think of houses, here, all like they are now, but they weren't. You walked a long ways to the other fellow's house.<sup>54</sup>*

While some homeowners continued to own several parcels of land, the majority of the homeowners owned only the land upon which their houses stood and perhaps an adjoining lot.

The owners were thrifty and appear to have enjoyed a good life, although luxuries were unknown in most households. Their homes were simple, and very similar to those of their neighbors. A very good plain house could be built for \$800 in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

Some people went beyond the basics. In 1890 T.C. and Fannie Collins built a \$1200 two-story house near his brother, Seaborn.<sup>55</sup> Others built more restrained versions. Walter Washington and James C. Blocker built smaller houses valued at \$400 each. On a much more modest scale, J.R. Rogan and Frederick Lawrence built small one-story houses valued at \$100 each.

Almost from the beginning of the town, the houses were usually of finished lumber. Even the barbershop and restaurant operated by Manuel Lopes in the 1850s was a small frame building.<sup>56</sup> Several sawmills in the area made purchase of such materials fairly easy. The houses were generally attractive and well-kept, sometimes described as a "pretty little house" or as a "comfortable house" in contemporary news accounts.

The Madison residents ate well. Some of the houses had gardens planted with vegetables up to the doorstep, especially during the Depression years that began about 1893. They always had room for cows, pigs, and chickens to supplement their diets, as well as to earn a little extra cash for the sale of fresh milk, butter, and eggs.

In addition to being thought of as a "colored colony," that area in the valley east of 23rd Avenue became known as "coon hollow." Mrs. Wright used the term, as quoted earlier in the letter to her daughter. This term, still used today by some people, bears reference less to a geographic area, than as a description of a general presence of black people.

The origin of the term in Seattle has been debated from time to time. Among the explanations is the presence in the area of an early day farmer by the name of Kuhn, which somehow was corrupted or changed to "coon."<sup>57</sup>



The Grose family home pictured about 1893, above, and 1980, below.







George Grose grew up in territorial Seattle. He moved to East Madison with his family in 1889.

Another explanation relates to the presence, in past days, of many small streams which supported a large number of raccoons prior to the introduction of drainage and culvert systems.

Both explanations are plausible, but the term originated elsewhere as a reference to black people. During the 1890s a popular travelling parody which toured Seattle was called "In Coon's Hollow."

Most of the relatives of the early black inhabitants of the Madison Street area have died or moved to other locations in the city or the country, although the youngest daughter of Charles Harvey maintains a home across the street from his original homesite, and the granddaughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson maintains her home in the area.

### QUEEN ANNE HILL RESIDENTS

Mattie Vinyerd Harris was born in Seattle in 1894 and grew up with the town. Her father, Nelson Vinyerd, came to Seattle from Kansas shortly before the Fire. Her mother, Mrs. Mattie Vinyerd, came to Seattle in January of 1890. Mrs. Harris spent her early years near the foot of Queen Anne Hill, in the vicinity of Cedar and Republican Streets. She recalls:

*As the town grew up, you moved further out. We rented, of course. Very few people owned their own houses then. They were all poor . . . poor as church mice. They were neat little houses, of course. They were wooden, and small. You didn't have as large a house, and we had orchards and everything else. But we didn't normally live in that kind of a house. As the rents got higher, you had to find something that you could use, but they managed . . . The neighbors got along just fine. There was never any discrimination. They seemed to relate to poor people rather than to races.<sup>58</sup>*

Green Fields and his wife also lived on Queen Anne Hill from the early 1890s. Hardly any single family residences remain in Mrs. Harris's old neighborhood. This year will mark her 64th year in her neighborhood at the foot of Capitol Hill.

### REDISCOVERY OF GREEN LAKE

By 1891 some of the Green Lake area had been cleared. Around the turn of the century, Aframericans rediscovered the area and began to acquire property there. Carson Miller bought 20 lots and built a house near the lake in 1901. Frank Anderson bought property and built a house there that same year. William Teamer also bought property there in 1901.<sup>59</sup> Within a short time they would be joined by others: Charles Hughes, Lloyd and Emma Ray, and the Maunder family, who retained their quarter of a block on North 59th and Kensington until 1950.



The Maunder children in 1901, prior to moving to their Green Lake home. (l-r) George, Sadie Hartsfield, and Priscilla Kirk. (Mrs. Maunder, holding baby, skirt visible behind table).

Even as late as 1901, the Green Lake area was still heavily wooded in places. Calling their purchases a wise step, Mr. Cayton wrote in May 31, 1901:

*Car service is splendid and industriously inclined persons need not buy any fuel for a year or so.*

Some weeks later the *Republican* jocularly reported the killing in the area of three bears in the midst of "corner lots for sale." It was rural in character until well into this century. Priscilla Maunder Kirk recalls walking through cow pastures and wooded trails to get to school up until World War I.<sup>60</sup>

### YESLER-JACKSON MOSAIC

In 1883 settlers eagerly bought lots around Jackson Street at prices that had never been paid before in Seattle. The December 14, 1883 *Daily Intelligencer* expressed the belief that in a year's time the property would be some of the most desirable in the city. But the neat little houses were soon hedged in by larger buildings, and the residential character was transformed in less than a decade to a more transient, commercially-oriented, disreputable area where "nice" families did not choose to live.

However, some poor, though respectable, families did live near Jackson Street, but the area between Jackson and Yesler was largely inhabited by broken families and people from the underworld. Some shopowners lived in quarters above their businesses and rented their surplus space.

This area was characterized, more than anyplace else in town, by the diversity of its population. People of almost every ethnic and racial group living in Seattle today could be found in this section of the city. The lower part of this area was long considered to be part of the red-light district but there were also a number of legitimate businesses in the area. A building that burned at the corner of Sixth and Jackson in 1891 contained a drugstore, two saloons, a restaurant, a lodging house, and a carpenter's shop.

However, a preponderance of gaming rooms, saloons, and brothels soon flourished here, and the area became even less desirable following a City Council edict in 1892 that brothels would no longer be permitted along upper First and Second Avenues, or north of Yesler and east of Fifth Avenue. The order further contributed to the growth of the settlement of disorderly persons in the Whitechapel district, south of Jackson.

Quite often newcomers found their first lodgings below Yesler Way, but as they found employment and became more established, they moved away from the area. Families with children were probably nervous about what the presence of persons who seemed to prosper outside the law as an unwholesome influence on their children. Although some persons continued to live there for many years, that part of town represented the antithesis of a settled, organized community.

Railroad porters and waiters lived in conveniently located hotels and rooming houses in the area. The Sleeping Car Porters' Club was located in the area from its inception. Mrs. Ray reports some poor, ill-kept single family homes there, also.

The area south of Yesler was unhealthy as well as unattractive. The June 10, 1900 edition of the *P.I.* discusses the stagnant water which contributed to typhoid fever and malaria in the area. It also describes litter thrown off the sidewalks and pile bridges at Jackson Street, Second and Fourth Avenues, and below King Street, consisting of "decaying fruits, refuse and garbage of all kinds, old cans and cast off clothing."

The article also mentions that "hollowedeyed blanched faced morphine fiends inhabit some places under the bridges." Mrs. Ray corroborates the presence of such homeless persons, including some young women, in her book.<sup>61</sup>

East of 15th Avenue, Jackson Street resembled other areas of the city, consisting mostly of single family dwellings of working class families.

By 1901 all of the Aframericans owning land in the Pioneer Square area were dead, and land ownership had shifted to other parts of the city. The preponderance of land owned by black people was in the Madison Street area from the 1890s. George Riley, the last remaining original member of the Workingmen's Joint Stock Association, retained a few lots, which he bequeathed to his daughter, Bonita Riley Wright, upon his death in 1905.

In the following years difficulty in purchasing property would become the rule rather than the exception, as white people formed covenants among themselves not to sell to persons of color. In some areas they would seek expulsion of their black neighbors, some of whom had been the first persons to build homes in those places.<sup>62</sup>

At this writing an increasing number of young white families have moved to the East Madison District, returning the area's racial composition to approximately what it was prior to World War II. The visual aspect is undergoing much greater change as fewer vacant lots remain, and condominiums are introduced to the area.

## 6 Women and Social Life

"We are pressing onward, upward —  
Lifting as we climb."

Theme song, National  
Association of Colored  
Women's Clubs, Inc.

The role of black women in Seattle was substantial, yet quiet, and largely unrecorded. For the first 30 years of the city's history, women were greatly outnumbered by men. This was particularly true of black women.

Local legend credits Mrs. Sarah Grose as the first black woman resident. She was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1836. As a girl she moved to Washington, D.C., where she met her husband, William. She and her daughter Rebecca and son George came to Seattle after her husband's arrival about 1860. Both children were born in Washington, D.C., and the family spent some time in California during the 1850s, prior to their move to British Columbia.

Mention is made of a "colored gentleman and lady" in the July 9, 1866 edition of the *Puget Sound Semi-Weekly* newspaper. Perhaps the reference is to William and Sarah Grose. Black women are not mentioned again until 1879, when they first appear in the county census data.

The 1879 census lists nine females, including two month old Etta Grose, daughter of William Henry Grose, who was perhaps the first child of African descent born in Seattle. The others were Mary Grose, mother of the baby and daughter-in-law of Sarah Grose, Rebecca Grose, Rosanna and Harriet Freeman who had arrived seven years before, Mary Mines, Frances Colston, and Mary Quincy.

By 1880 twenty-two year old Esse Richardson was working in town as a servant, and Rosanna and Harriet Freeman were still living in town with their family, as were Sarah and Rebecca Grose. African-born Mary

Stevens, and her English-born family, including her daughter, Elizabeth, were living on their farm in the Cedar Mountain area of Southeast King County.<sup>1</sup>

A more noticeable increase in women followed the completion of the railroads to Seattle. In 1891 there were 24 women reported in the City Directory. Among the occupations represented were nursing, housekeeping, and teaching music.

Popular belief was that "a woman's place is in the home" and so women with families did not generally work outside the home, unless they were forced to by necessity. Husbands with their own businesses, or working at good paying jobs, proudly boasted that their wives did not go out and work in white people's homes, and sought diligently to educate their daughters so that they would not have to work as servants, either. But the maintenance of a 19th century home was a full time occupation. Labor saving devices were few, and well beyond the means of the average woman. Housework required long, hard hours of physical exertion.

Part of the Victorian Era housewife's lot was the battling of mud in winter and dust in the summer. Those living right next to or on Madison contended with both until 1900 when the situation was somewhat relieved by the City Council's approval of a plan to hard-surface the street at that time. Sandstone blocks were laid from First to Third Avenues, macadam pavement with concrete curbs and brick gutters were laid from Fourth to Eighteenth Avenues, macadam pavement with wood curbs from 19th to 22nd Avenues, and planking with wood curbs from 23rd Avenue to Lake Washington.<sup>2</sup> Persons living on other streets were not so fortunate, and dirt roads were wide-spread until well after 1910.

Women who lived closer to downtown did not have to struggle quite so hard against mud and dust as did the East Madison women. Wooden sidewalks in the former case helped somewhat, as did streets that were regularly sprinkled, and later planked or bricked.

Modern conveniences were gradually introduced in the Madison Street area during the first decade of settlement. The water line was established in 1891 and a sewer line was installed in 1900. Mail delivery was extended to 25th Avenue from East Marion to East Denny Way in December 1899.

Since few women had vacuum cleaners, floors were swept, and mopped, and rugs were taken outside and beaten. In the early days houses were lighted by kerosene lamps, with glass chimneys that had to be frequently cleaned. Mattie Vinyerd Harris recalls some good housekeeping practices from that era:

*If you were a careful housekeeper . . . you kept your house kind of dark in the summertime when the flies were bad and the smelling leaves in there, and they stayed out. You didn't have screens, nobody had screens. They just had to beat off the flies. You have no idea. That's why they had covered dishes. Those days they used to put a large doily on the middle of the table and they kept certain things on the table — your sugar, and your salt and pepper and maybe a bowl of applesauce. No screen doors and no window screens, but they couldn't get in that. You had to protect your food. That's the way they did it.<sup>3</sup>*

Mrs. Harris does not recall the name of the "smelling leaves" to which she refers.

Existing records of bills of sale and chattel sales provide some idea of how the houses were furnished. The earliest record of household goods is that of Manuel Lopes referred to in an earlier chapter.

In December of 1873 the T.P. Freeman family bought \$25 worth of household furniture, one cook stove, a bureau, table, bedstead, two mattresses, a mirror, three chairs and garden utensils.<sup>4</sup> Households twenty years later seemed to require more comfort and decorative items. Floors were often carpeted, and walls were papered.

T.C. Collins and his wife Maggie, like most people, experienced financial difficulties during the Depression of the 1890s. In February of 1895 they mortgaged all of their household goods, consisting of "one three piece oak bedroom set, one Singer sewing machine, one clock, one round table, one heating stove and pipe, one cot, twenty yards of Ingram carpet, one rocker, four chairs, one pair of lace curtains, one cook stove and pipes, one table, four chairs, dishes and utensils, bedding, and other household goods, useful and ornamental."<sup>5</sup>

Although most records of chattel and conditional sales are of merchandise basic to keeping an average-sized house, the more affluent members of the population tended to combine function and comfort with an appreciation of beauty. In December of 1899 J.E. Hawkins filed an inventory of goods owned by Mrs. May B. Rideout at her home at 616 Cherry Street. The goods included: "1 parlor table, cherry; 1 cherry book case, 1 revolving book case; 1 cherry cobbler seat rocker, 1 oak rocker, 1 office chair, 6 piece parlor set, 2 fur rugs, moquette carpet in parlor, couch, iron bedstead, ash bureau commode, hardwood seat rocker, heater (air tight), Ingram carpet, 1 toilet set, 6 dining room chairs, 6 hole steel range, 1 refrigerator."<sup>6</sup> The goods were valued at \$85.75. The office chair and book cases were formerly used in Mr. Rideout's law offices.

Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Burdett had one of the more outstanding showpieces of the day: a square grand piano.<sup>7</sup>



The amount of household goods depended upon a person's marital status. Single people usually took rooms in office buildings, lodging houses, or with families, all of which required a very small investment, or lack of the need to invest in furnishings. In October 1898, a newcomer with slim resources, D.W. Griffin, paid a furniture store \$17.25 for use of 1 folding bed, 1 pair of cascade pillows and one comforter in his room in the Colman Building.<sup>8</sup>



Sundays during 1900 were days of leisure.

Generally, certain chores were performed on certain days. Monday was washday. (There was even a belief during the time that if the washing were not done on Monday, a loved one would die.) The wash was done by hand. Washtubs were set atop the cooking range in order to boil the bed and table linens in soapy water, while the clothes and other household items soaked in a second tub. Stains and soiled spots were scrubbed on a washboard with octagonal bars of yellow soap. The boiled laundry was taken out of the hot water by using a long stick and

transferred to clear rinse water, followed by a rinse through a tub of water containing bluing which tended to make white clothes appear whiter. Clothes from the soaking tub were also passed through clear water rinses and all were wrung by hand, or in the case of a lucky few, they were passed through a wringer which was attached to the sink, then hung outside to dry.

The ironing was done on Tuesday and Wednesday. Everything was ironed — sheets, socks, underwear, and all washable outer-wear. Once again the kitchen stove was pressed into service, heating the heavy cast iron smoothing irons. Most women had two. One was heated on the stove while the other was in use.



By the middle nineties women and children were a visible part of the black population.

Thursdays were reserved for marketing and miscellaneous chores. The time devoted to this depended on the size of the family.

Friday was housecleaning day. Floors and furniture were swept and dusted, rugs beaten, and the house put in good order for the upcoming weekend, which might include Sunday visitors.

Saturday was the busiest day of the week. Extra baking and cooking had to be done as everyone, even those people no longer committed to the religious life, observed the Sabbath by not cooking.<sup>9</sup> Perishable foods were placed in the cooling box on the back porch for Sunday dinner. The house was given a thorough inspection and additional cleaning if necessary. This was the day when mothers were helped by their children, older girls helping with the cooking and cleaning, boys cleaning and raking yards, emptying ashes and cutting wood to be used during the coming week.

The housewife's weekly routine was interrupted seasonally as she launched into spring cleaning and canning and drying fruits from her trees, and those shared by her neighbors in late summer. The kitchen safe was filled with jars of jellies, preserves, and relishes, and she pickled salmon and other fish to supplement her family's larder.

Women in the East Madison area generally had to go longer distances for shopping, but the cable car was readily available to the downtown area or to points in between. Women who came to Seattle in territorial days were close enough to the commercial life of the city to walk a short distance to secure food, clothing and small items for the house.

The shopping trips gave these lonely women a chance to leave the house and visit with the townspeople along the way. But basic conveniences like running water were yet to come, thus rendering house-keeping much more tedious than it was by the 1890s.

With few exceptions a woman's work began early in the morning and continued until late at night. In some homes the husband lighted the fires, but quite often the wife was the first person up and the last one to go to bed. There were cases of widowed mothers who laundered their children's single set of school clothes before retirement for the night. Rising at dawn and earlier in winter months, a mother would set about making the fire so that her family could dress in relative warmth. This was very important in pre-central heating days. Seattle had a few cold spells so severe in the last century that the house plants froze. The kitchen often served as the dressing room on cold mornings, and the range was used both in breakfast preparation and in heating the room.

Sundays allowed more leisure and breakfast was generally elaborate in more affluent homes, often including biscuits, ham, fried chicken, fish cakes, and home-canned fruit. Eggs and milk were always available. Most people kept chickens in the backyard, and quite a few kept at least one cow until well into the twentieth century. This was true of



Many women worked in their homes by taking in laundry.

those people living downtown as well as those living in the East Madison District. As late as 1893, a man living at the corner of Third and Pike was arrested for failure to keep cow manure cleared from his property. In the late 1890s George and Lovina Grose kept cows with names like Dolly, Jetty, Sallie, Flossie, and Betsy at their place on the corner of 23rd Avenue and East Olive Way.<sup>11</sup>

The East Madison District was, of course, much more sparsely settled than the downtown district. Residents of that community could very well be thought of as farmers. Practically everyone, black and white, kept gardens.

Women usually did the milking and the churning, and making butter was part of their work. They also had to keep a watchful eye out to make sure that the cow did not get into onions or pea vines, as the taste of butter was affected by the former, and milk given by cows that eat the latter smells rotten.

It was the woman who sat up nights nursing sick children, or other relatives. She had measles, mumps, scarlet fever, dropsy and consumption to contend with.

When a woman wasn't actually engaged in house-cleaning and laundry, there was the mending to be done and old clothes to be turned into quilts. Evenings with the family were usually spent with needlework in hand to create doilies, lap robes and crocheted lace with which to trim girls' underwear and pillowcases.

Her work was truly never done, but she could find time to help an ailing neighbor, bake something special for her family, or place her unsaved husband on a prayer list if she was religious and he was not, plan birthday parties and special celebrations, as well as take part in the social life of the community. Her house was always open to her neighbors. People with problems came to relieve their burdens by talking to her. She counselled, gave advice and often just listened. She was a soft touch to strangers. Hungry transients sometimes knocked at the door in quest of a meal, and few were ever turned away. It was difficult, if not impossible, for these people who had been through the hard days of slavery, or knew the stories of those times, to refuse a meal to a homeless person of any color.

Sometimes a woman who had stood on her feet, working ten hours a day, sat up all night with a sick family member or neighbor. Children without parents were taken in and "raised" by childless or older women who treated them as their own children and heirs.



Most women worked at home, but some were compelled to work outside their homes.

### **Colored Ladies' Society.**

**Yesterday afternoon several colored ladies of this city met at the residence of Mrs. Lawrence, on Madison street, and organized a social circle. It is the first organization of the kind in Seattle, and a great amount of pleasure will no doubt be derived from interesting features to be introduced by the ladies.**

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In December 1889 the first organization of black women was formed.

The Black Victorians were thirty-five years removed from slavery by 1900. Some of them had been slaves, others were born after their parents had been freed. Many people found it difficult to talk about that part of their past. It was painful and also tainted with shame. Some children were not told of the period by their parents who would rather forget, but a few experiences were related each year during Emancipation Proclamation Day ceremonies, or by some of the community elders in a more casual setting, so that almost all of the black children here had some understanding of slavery.

Women had been mercilessly exploited, economically and sexually, while in bondage. By the nineties, the better educated women had groped past the doubt of their own self-worth, and were seeking to guide their less fortunate sisters toward enhanced self respect which, hopefully, would lead to an increased respect by others for the race. They recognized that emancipation was incomplete so long as the vast majority of the women were ignorant and had a low opinion of their ability to take any meaningful part in the world outside their homes.

In most places in the country black women first came to appreciate their worth in connection with church organizations. The first organization of black women in Seattle occurred near the time that the African Methodists decided to formally organize a church. It was largely through the efforts of women and their organizations that the A.M.E. church site was purchased six months after the establishment of the Ladies Colored Social Circle. The work of women in both the A.M.E. and the Baptist Church largely sustained the financial stability of those institutions through the early years.

Life was hard for most people, black and white, during the 19th century. It was as hard as any previous century had been in the Africans' sojourn in this country. The nineties were anything but gay for the vast majority of people struggling through a crushing depression for most of

that decade. Race prejudice aggravated the day-to-day difficulties of black people. Even a janitorial job was difficult to secure here for most of the period. The scope of some families' lives was narrowed to the day-to-day struggle for survival. The black woman maintained her patience and her strength of character as she watched her man go out into an often hostile world seeking work.

Many women nursed their dreams that someday things would be better, if not for them, then for their children, and the children were often told this. They wanted to believe that this was still the land of opportunity, even when a man's work was scarce or pay was low, or the children needed shoes. They were resilient, too. When things got too rough, they made arrangements with some trusted person to look after the children and went to work.

"A woman's place is in the home." In reality that popular notion held for only some of the population. Many of the Victorian women's "places" were working inside the home and in some cases outside as well, to supplement their husbands' incomes. Some women found it necessary to work to support the whole family on their single income. It is difficult to know just what percentage did work because women were not always included in census data, and were sometimes omitted from city directories. In a few cases their occupations were given or they were listed as "work at -." But some of the women most active in the life of the community are never listed in either source. Their names are found, instead, in newspaper reports of activities, instruments of sales, letters, and through interviews with present-day residents.

The most prevalent means of earning income at home was that of taking in laundry. Some of the poorer women spent their lives over washtubs. At the turn of the century there was an old lady, nearly blind, known around 20th and Madison as "Old Auntie," whose sole means of support was the money she earned by washing for her more fortunate neighbors.<sup>12</sup> Families were accustomed to living with baskets of clothes belonging to other people. In a week's time, a woman could inhale a dozen different perfumes from the clothes of her customers.

Those women who had the skills could earn income while staying home and sewing for others. Mrs. Alice Blocker and Mrs. Sallie Day both worked as dressmakers in their East Madison district homes in the early 1890s. Mrs. Victoria Susandt earned enough from dressmaking in her Ballard home to support herself and her daughter, Olive, during the turn of the century.

Music teachers found their skills in sufficient demand that they could stay at home and earn a living. Miss Annie Jackson moved with her parents, William and Amy Jackson, from New York to Seattle in 1889. She is listed as a music teacher in the 1891 City Directory.





Mrs. Theresa Brown Dixon (shown in 1881) attended a school for young ladies in Portland, and studied nurses' training in Vancouver, Washington. She was a nurse in Seattle from about 1886 until after the turn of the century.

Single women and widows often found it necessary to work outside the home. There was no shame attached to a poor woman earning an honest living as housemaid, cook, nursemaid or nurse, although nursing did not enjoy the respect then that it does now. Five women are listed as nurses in the 1891 City Directory. Mrs. Theresa Brown Dixon worked as a nurse for many years, beginning in the late Victorian period. Her daughter, Theresa Dixon Flowers, remembers:

*My father had an accident and she had to go to work. She had had nurses' training in Vancouver [Washington], so she did nursing and then she did midwifery. That was before there were hospitals to go to. Everybody had babies at home. She worked for many years. I know times when she wouldn't get home to stay for a year. She'd go from one case to another.<sup>13</sup>*

Both of Mrs. Dixon's daughters, Christine Mabel and Theresa, became nurses, and each worked in the profession for more than thirty years. By the time they entered training it was a well-respected occupation.

Black women occasionally found work demonstrating household or food items. In October of 1893 Louch, Augustine and Company featured "Aunt Jemima" who served "her famous hot cakes with Hill's maple syrup free to all." "Auntie" Montgomery, a woman of "poor circumstances," found work in December of 1895 distributing samples of maple syrup and similar products at various drugstores when she wasn't caring for children. She was reported by the *Seattle Times* as earning \$2.50 a week for tending a baby left in her care.<sup>14</sup>

By the last years of the 19th century hop growers in King and Pierce Counties employed Indians, Aframericans, Chinese, Japanese, and a few whites as well. Several black women joined their families for work in the hop fields east and west of the Cascade Mountains during the fall. In 1896 it was possible to make seventy-five cents for each box picked, and a good adult picker could fill two boxes in one day.

Many women worked as charwomen. Mrs. Mattie Vinyerd, a widow, found such work at the old Bon Marche store after it moved from First Avenue and Cedar Street to Second Avenue and Pike Street. Her daughter, Mattie Harris, describes that work:

*... the first that I remember, she was working at the Bon Marche. They were cleaning at night, and I think that they scrubbed that Bon Marche on their knees at that time.*<sup>15</sup>

To become a store clerk was almost an impossible dream, but as the number of black businesses and professions grew, a few women were able to find clerical work. Miss Clara Threet came to Seattle from Franklin in the late nineties. In 1899 she enrolled in Leo's Business College. Upon completion of her course she was hired by Lawyer J. E. Hawkins on a part-time basis. In 1901 manufacturers' agents, the Frank



Country outings and excursions to surrounding towns were popular Victorian pastimes.

brothers, a white firm, hired her for stenography work in the Pacific Building. She was employed there for many years, and later worked for Attorney Andrew Black in the same building. Miss Threet was joined in stenography work by her half-sister, Mrs. Octavia Richardson Norris, who also worked in the Pacific Building shortly after the turn of the century.



According to local legend Mrs. Sarah Grose was the first black woman resident of Seattle. She came about 1860.

A handful of black women continued to take business courses. As the number of black firms requiring trained clerical help remained small, and most white firms refused to hire them, professional jobs for black women were very scarce in Seattle until the late 1960s.

A small group of ladies in Seattle from the late 1880s led comfortable lives and had the leisure to enjoy matinees, luncheons, and discussions. Early members of this group formed the Ladies Colored Social Circle in December of 1889. The list of members is incomplete, but among the earliest were Mrs. Fred Lawrence at whose Madison Street home the organization was formed, Mrs. Logan of 216 Second Street, and Rebecca Grose Dixon who died some weeks after the formation of the group.

Weekly meetings were held at various members' homes in which luncheons and pleasant conversation were indulged, and plans were made for literary and musical entertainments. Some of these were presented in Stewart's Hall on Madison Street, where the emerging African Methodist Episcopal Church would soon hold its meetings.

By the late 1890s the crisis in race relations had deepened and women became increasingly more concerned about the trend nationally and locally. They continued their social and literary club activities, but many were finding these less important and moved towards greater service for the good of the race as a whole. Some of them were involved in the organization of the Seattle Chapter of the National Afro-American

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## **Sleeping Car Porters' Ball.**

**A ball was given last night at the Sleeping Car Porters' Club, on West Yesler way. A large number of colored people participated. At 2 o'clock this morning the dance was still going on.**

People from all walks of life enjoyed balls during the 1890s.

Council, and several served as committee members. These women were Miss Barbara Davis, Mrs. Hattie Reed, Mrs. Alzada Collins, Mrs. J.C. Robinson, and Mrs. C.M. Scott.

Some women could not read their names in boxcar letters, but literate or not, education of their children was very important. Those who could do so, supervised homework as far as their own Freedmen's Bureau schooling, or more advanced learning allowed. In some cases this was just past long division and basic grammar; in other cases, through Shakespearean sonnets. If they couldn't help, older sisters and brothers, or neighbors, were called upon for assistance.

Women with high school, normal school or college educations introduced their children to European and Aframerican composers, literary classics and leading magazines. Children were constantly reminded of the importance of being "a credit to the race." Their grammar was corrected throughout their growing years. If a wife spoke Standard English and her husband did not, he, too, was corrected. She also encouraged her husband to take business, law, or correspondence courses.

Children's manners were polished until they reflected well on their mothers' care and upbringing. They were expected to obey their parents at all times without question. It was considered the height of rudeness not to speak to all black people except those in the sporting life, and to all the white people in the neighborhood who displayed no hostility to Blacks.

If, in spite of all her efforts, the child grew up to be a maverick, it "took after" his or her father's side of the family. The crowning blow to a doting mother was marriage to the wrong sort of person, particularly a poorly-educated person who had exhibited no previous initiative in school or work, and whose family never attended church, showed no interest in racial progress by membership in groups with that specific aim, or worst of all, who came from the redlight district.

Children contributed to the family's well-being in several ways. During the week they helped with pasturing the cows and bringing them home, milking, churning, gardening, weeding, and gathering as well as dispensing food for the pigs and chickens. They also delivered butter,

eggs, and fruit in season to their mothers' regular customers. Cloth for dresses was bought from "egg money." Others worked away from home whenever they could find paying jobs. Some worked as elevator boys at the Rainier Grand Hotel for \$15 a month, minus living expenses. Occasionally a black boy became a cabin boy on a ship. Teen-aged girls sometimes found jobs as nursemaids or housemaids.

Mattie Vinyerd Harris and her brother helped her widowed mother during the turn of the century:

*We used to go up on the side of Queen Anne Hill . . . There's a park up there [now]. We used to go and pick "smelling" leaves. That's what grocery stores, and especially the meat markets, would buy to hang over their cases. Those leaves had a very nice odor. But flies didn't like them. They were very large leaves . . . I haven't smelled them since.<sup>16</sup>*

Mrs. Harris's brother also caught salmon for his mother to pickle, and keep in the basement until used.

Life was not unmitigated toil. While much time was devoted to maintaining homes and livelihood, there was time for leisure pursuits. By 1870 some of the most talented Aframericans in the country had begun touring as far west as Victoria, B.C. and Seattle. In 1876 the New Georgia Minstrels appeared at Yesler's Hall. They were followed by the Fisk Jubilee Choir in the 1880s and 1890s. Throughout the 1890s Seattleites could hear such top quality performers as Miss Flora Batson, the "colored Jenny Lind," Sisserita Jones, also known as "Black Patti," who sang at the White House for the inaugural reception of President Benjamin Harrison, and pianist Blind Tom. Traveling and local drama troupes presented *The Underground Railroad*, based on William Still's first-hand account of that momentous undertaking. Melodramas, and a variety of "coon" shows, which many people found acceptable in the context of the times, were frequently offered to the local public.

Recalling activities of some of the Aframericans in the early 1890s, Mrs. Oxendine writes:

*We Seattleites were sociable in those days. That is, our group was. There was something going on all the time. Balls, barbecues, picnics, excursions. There was always some place to go . . .<sup>17</sup>*

They were a product of their time. Memberships in clubs and lodges which held regular meetings were popular. Visits between friends were pleasant and economical ways to pass the time.

Much of the organized life of the Aframericans in Seattle originated among residents of the Madison District. Next to the A.M.E. Church,



Some East Madison residents lived similarly to people in rural areas during the 1890s.

the home of William and Sarah Grose was the center of the social life of the small middle class of the nineties. Mrs. Oxendine describes the role of her parents in the life of the Black Victorians:

*The Groses' was the mecca of the social and fraternal gatherings. Sunday was a feast day at the Groses. Father was a good cook and made lovely cakes and pies. He raised chickens, ducks and hogs, and the vegetables and fruit and berries, so he could well afford to entertain.<sup>18</sup>*

Visitors from out of town were often hosted by the Groses. Captain W.D. Matthews, national grand master of the York Rite masons, stayed at their home when he came to Seattle to install officers for the Cornerstone Grand Lodge in 1892.

Some of the activities of the Aframericans reflected their economic standing. The most elaborate functions were given by the small upper economic group. The installation of officers of lodges were occasions for some of the grandest social affairs of the year.

Balls were very fashionable during the 1890s and just briefly hinted at a little bit of magic in an era when the vast majority of the people were hard-working and poor. They were given by people from all walks of life. White newsboys and waiters, cable car conductors, and black sleeping car porters, as well as middle and upper class people gave them.



John F. Cragwell in costume for a play presented in the early 1890s.

Women worked many long hours planning and perfecting elaborate creations of silk, drapery and lace in preparation for the upcoming Odd Fellows, Masonic, or Knights of Pythias balls. Here they could show off their skills in dressmaking as well as dancing. The affairs tended to be very formal, and were attended by the "best" folk of the community. They were often joined by the "best" folk from Tacoma.

By the 1890s the line was clearly drawn between the upper levels of Aframerican society and the lower levels. The former included professionals and persons with steady jobs, many of which were low in prestige in the general society. The latter was made up of people in the sporting life, drifters, and single men whose work was casual labor. Some of the poorer, but honest, folk also fell in this category. Already those people living around the East Madison district represented the





Women worked long hours to create elegant dresses for balls.

more stable and successful element, which was also the backbone of the churches. In the case of the African Methodists, this was true as early as 1890, following the move to the East Madison district of such families as the Groses, the Oxendines, the Fred Lawrences, the Charles Harveys, the Cragwells, and such single men as John Gayton, I. I. Walker, Con Rideout, and Allen A. Garner.

In 1892 a group of local people (Mrs. Oxendine's set) presented an evening of Shakespeare at the Opera House. The program included excerpts from *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.<sup>19</sup> Cakewalks were occasionally presented, usually by white promoters, with mixed success.

Seattle, like the rest of the nation, was caught up in the excitement of baseball. The M.K. Kelly's baseball team was organized in June of 1890. It played teams from Tacoma and Kent, and local teams from around the city. It enjoyed a loyal and enthusiastic following. The team was succeeded in 1891 by the Seattle Blues, which was also popular. Many people turned out on Sunday afternoons to watch lacrosse star George Washington Paris lead his white teammates to stunning victories.

A favorite way to spend holidays and Sundays was to take an excursion by train to South King County for picnics, or to board a steamship to Tacoma or Victoria. The more affluent women sometimes entertained out-of-town guests and friends with lunch aboard chartered yachts.

Special holidays, such as Emancipation Day, were generally commemorated by a program or picnic sponsored by a special committee. Both the American and West Indian Emancipations were celebrated here during the 1890s, and occasionally observances were held on the date of the signing of the former.

Progressive whist parties were popular at the turn of the century, as were evenings spent playing and singing music, and reading poetry, some of it original. In the early nineties this was done on an informal basis, but by 1901 organizations, such as the Music Club, and the Evergreen Literary Society, which promoted these activities, were formed.

Improved camera techniques generated amateur photographers. The cover photo is from the collection of one of the most avid amateurs of the period, John F. Cragwell. His photographs, taken during his visit Nome were published in the Sunday, July 24, 1900 edition of the *P.I.*

Children were to be seen and not heard. They usually accompanied their parents on picnics, to baseball games and excursions, as well as to celebrations and regular services at church. Boys played marbles, mumblety-peg, and baseball in the streets or on vacant lots. Girls played dolls, jacks, and learned needlework. Boys and girls played hide-and-seek, ring-around-Rosy, and London Bridge is Falling Down.

Most entertaining was done at home. Dinner parties were greatly favored. Birthdays were celebrated by family members for older people, but children were sometimes given parties with invited guests. Weddings and receptions were generally held at home, although some people were married at church rectories. Funerals were often held in homes or in the case of some single men, at funeral parlors. Some funerals were held at churches, particularly if the deceased was well-known. When William Grose's funeral was held at the A.M.E. Church so many people attended that sixteen carriages were insufficient to carry all of the mourners to Lake View Cemetery.

**The Blues, the colored baseball team, will play a team from Tacoma in this city next Sunday. This will be the opening game, and the novelty of colored men playing the national game will doubtless draw a large attendance.**

The first baseball team, the M. K. Kellys, was organized in 1890. It was succeeded by the Blues in 1891.

Major holidays were celebrated at church and at home. J.H. Ryan, in the January 3, 1902 edition of the *Republican*, describes the New Year's Day reception given in the evening by the Quid Nunc Club:

George Washington Paris, 1900  
lacrosse star.



*The place was all that could be desired. The charming home of Mrs. George Grose was nicely decorated, red being the prevailing color. The dining room was cozily decorated, long stringers of crepe paper were tied to the chandelier and brought promiscuously to the table, where dainty bows of the national colors held them in place. Dainty refreshments were served, the punch bowl being presided over by Miss Dixon. Prof. Harris rendered many choice selections on the piano, while the guests thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the whist tables. If the example of the club is to be followed, ere the close of the year 1902 the recipient of an invitation to one of their affairs can truly "shake hands with themselves."*

In addition to evening entertainment on holidays, visitors called at friends' homes during the afternoon, usually between 2:00 o'clock and 5:00 o'clock.

Most of the women never realized their importance. Some of them, widowed, married to incapacitated men, and in a few instances, abandoned, held their families together singlehandedly. Regardless of their marital status, they were at the bottom of society, often poor and ignorant, but it was from that position that women served to undergird the black community by maintaining its basic unit, the family.

## 7 Education

*You cannot see a tree's roots all the time, but because one cannot see them does not mean that they do not exist. The tree couldn't stand without them.*

George Jackson  
in a letter to his father  
from Soledad Prison,  
May 15, 1968

Black children in schools was not an issue in Seattle until the 1960s. From the earliest time of their residence here, children attended schools without question. The 1879 King County census indicates that the Grose children "attend school," and the Stevens children are listed "at school" in the 1880 federal census.

Some black children remember isolation, loneliness, and unfair treatment at school during the turn of the century. Mattie Harris attended the old Denny School for about a year before it was razed. Then she attended the Warren Avenue School.

*We were the only Black at Warren Avenue School, my brother and I. They were pretty snooty. They seemed to accept my brother . . . the boys and all. He was maybe a different type, maybe he was more pushy, but anyhow they accepted him. He'd fight for his way, and when you start fighting the way opens. [I had] plenty of problems. Some of the teachers weren't too nice. If it was a group picked out to do something, you weren't in that group. Those things children notice more than real slights. There's a lot of things that would slip by a child, but when you're choosing a group for anything, they notice. Well, I'd like to get in on it, but I had no chance.<sup>1</sup>*

Theresa Dixon Flowers attended Pacific School beginning in 1900.

*That's the only school I remember. You had problems, great prejudice. They'd call you names. You'd walk along the streets and they'd say, "Oh, here comes a dark cloud. Looks like it's gonna rain"; all comments like that. I guess they were average kids of that day. The teachers were fair, I think, most of the time.*

Just how many children completed the full course offered through high school is not known, but George Grose is reported in his father's obituary to be a graduate of the University of Washington.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Grose is not listed in university catalogs or registration data, however.

William McDonald Austin entered the University of Washington School of Law shortly after its opening in May of 1899. He was the first Aframerican to graduate from the University with a Bachelor of Laws degree.

Austin moved to San Francisco from his home in Barbados while still a boy. In 1899 he came to Seattle and began the study of law while working to support himself. He was elected junior class treasurer. The student yearbook, the *Tyee*, which was published by the junior class that year, said of Austin: "The gravity and stillness of your youth the world hath noted."

Austin graduated in June of 1902. His thesis was entitled "The Civil Rights Act." In October of that year he went to Manila, The Philippines to practice law.

The *Republican* reports in 1903 that Charles W. Scrutchin was a University of Washington graduate and that he was practicing law after graduating from the law school at the University of Michigan. No dates are given, and Mr. Scrutchin is not listed in University of Washington records prior to 1903.

Education was of great importance to Seattle's black population. Many of the elders were illiterate, having reached maturity before Emancipation, and large numbers of those born after the Civil War were only semi-literate. About half the people in the 1880 census were reported as illiterate, while the percentage decreased considerably in the 1900 census. Of the 406 Blacks listed in the latter, only 5.5% were classed as illiterate.

Making a living, or helping to support the family, quite often took precedence over remaining in school. But most people felt education to be the main route from dull, backbreaking labor, as well as the prerequisite for taking one's place in the world as a respected individual. A small number of children growing up in Seattle prior to the turn of the

### Night School Wanted.

The waiters at the Rainier hotel have joined with a number of other colored citizens of Seattle in asking the board of education for the establishment of a night school. The petitioners allege that they have to work all day in order to earn their living, and that night is the only time when they can study.

The first night school was established in Seattle in 1891.

Other than as students, persons of African descent were excluded from the formal educational process. Some Seattle residents had teaching experience elsewhere. George Woods taught school in Texas before coming here, but spent his life in Seattle as a bricklayer. Other people had similar experiences. Mrs. Edith Rogan had taught school previously, but was unable to continue the profession here because Blacks were not hired as teachers. This exclusion policy continued until the hiring of Mrs. Thelma Dewitty and Mrs. Manta Johnson in 1947.

Despite the political activism of a segment of the Aframerican population, the Seattle School Board also remained an all-white preserve. Aframerican members were elected to the Franklin District Board within a few months of their arrival in 1891, but it was more than seventy years later when Alfred Cowles became the first Aframerican member of the Seattle School Board.

As the era closed black people's "place" in Seattle and elsewhere became more strictly defined, in terms of job opportunities and social advancement. Partly because of discrimination in employment, the number of high school graduates in 1900 was very small throughout the state. Persons with high school diplomas and college degrees usually moved away from Washington in search of other than menial work. The *Republican* reports students in normal schools and colleges of every western state except Washington in 1901. Several persons interviewed, who reached maturity in the second decade of this century, recalled the futility of a college education in Seattle. Work for black people prior to World War II was strictly menial, and most people were unwilling to pursue college degrees only to end up sweeping floors.

## 8 Religious Life

*As far as Negro people are concerned, the church is the nucleus of our community. We learned about the Bible, but the African Methodist Episcopal Church has always kept up with Black History. We had Frederick Douglass Week, and pageants that portrayed our people . . . .*

Sara Oliver Jackson  
October 3, 1975

In Seattle, as elsewhere among Aframerican people, first signs of organized life appeared in the effort to establish a church. Prior to the organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, most persons of religious inclination attended white churches. Whether they were restricted to segregated seating, or served the sacrament after all the white worshippers, as were some black people in other parts of the territory and nation, is not known. The few accounts of those times fail to discuss these details, and interviews with children of Victorians do not shed any light on this subject.

The church was the most important and basic expression of an Aframerican group initiative. It was their own, run without dictation and regulation by those who affected their lives in so many ways in the outside world. During the Victorian period it represented the largest unified financial investment of the community.





Members of the First A.M.E. Church at a Church conference about 1900. First row: (l-r) John F. Cragwell, Daisy O'Brien Rudisell, unknown, Alma Clark Glass, rest unknown. Second row: Unknown, Georgetta Selby, unknown, Mrs. Vivian Spearman, unknown, Margaret O'Brien Thomas, unknown. Third row: Burt Thomas, George Turner, John Wesley Fort, unknown.

In the 1880s Bishop Abraham Grant, presiding bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church hierarchy, assigned a Rev. Thomas as missionary to the Pacific Northwest with instructions to survey Seattle as a possible new field in which to extend the church.<sup>1</sup> Upon his arrival Mr. Thomas met with a group of people who had previous affiliations with the Church in the East and South.

From 1894 the Baptists had their own church, and together with the Methodists, the two groups formed the nucleus of the social life of the black community. Much of the dramatic, literary, musical and oratorical talent of the community was nurtured and displayed in the churches. The formation of Black thought on local and national issues was stimulated by discussions of various subjects in the churches. And churches were the most important centers for the teaching of Black History.

Ties with the larger Aframerican population, nationally, were promoted by the local churches. Topics debated in Philadelphia, Chicago, or Memphis were shortly afterwards debated in Seattle. Circulation of such church publications as the *A.M.E. Review*, and the *Christian Recorder* brought awareness of church affairs, as well as a wide range of secular issues, such as emigration from the United States. Important members of the national church organizations often included Seattle in their nationwide tours. Seattleites, after attending national conventions in other parts of the country, returned with news on sacred and secular matters.

By late 1890 other organizations were formed which were non-religious, and oriented toward mutual aid. However it was the churches which were the most permanent institutions of the Aframerican population of the Victorian era.

About 1886 persons of the African Methodist Episcopal persuasion began meeting in various affiliates' homes where they were visited intermittently by travelling missionaries. Seaborn J. Collins, who would ultimately be ordained a deacon in 1896, and a minister about 1898, was the local moving spirit. In 1886 he gathered up the few black children here and organized a Sunday School which was held in various persons' homes.

The Rev. A. M. Taylor is credited with completing the organization of the Methodists.<sup>2</sup> The church was organized in early 1890 at a meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Lawrence near what is now 19th and Madison. Present at the meeting were S. J. Collins, I. I. Walker, John T. Gayton, Milton and Lucretia Roy, Charles H. Harvey, and several others.<sup>3</sup>

On January 29, 1890 the *P.I.* carried an announcement stating that "services of the A.M.E. congregation will be held at Mrs. Harding's restaurant." The meeting was addressed by the Rev. C. Augustus, a missionary of the Church for Oregon and Washington.

Their next meeting place was above a wagon shop at Stewart's Hall which was located near 20th and Madison. They remained at this location until they bought the present church site at 14th and Madison in September 1890. Morning and evening services and a midafternoon Sunday School were held each Sunday. A weekly prayer meeting was held on Thursday evenings. This is when the Rev. L. S. Blakeney assumed leadership.

During Mr. Blakeney's administration the seventeen original parishioners worked diligently to buy a church site. The ladies, already organized into a social circle, decided to invest their time and energy toward this goal. Calling on the leading musical and literary talents in the community, they presented a series of concerts, and they held socials, charging small fees. From their donations, gifts of friends, and funds raised by holding festivals, socials and entertainments, they had collected \$254 by July, 1890 which was placed on deposit at the Dexter Horton Company Bank.

The congregation bought a lot with a house on it just off the Madison Street cable car line. Carpenter S.J. Collins converted it into a church building of one and a half stories, around which they cultivated and carefully maintained attractive grounds.

The property was purchased on September 2, 1890 for \$2000, terms being \$250 down payment, \$250 to be paid October 1, 1890, and \$50 on the first of each month following at 10% interest until the contract was completed.<sup>4</sup> Trustees negotiating this purchase were: the Rev. Blakeney, Seaborn J. Collins, Milton Roy, George H. Grose, Robert R. Brown, Alfred P. Freeman, and James C. Blocker. These men were also signers of the incorporation papers on August 13, 1891. The church was called Jones Street A.M.E. Church, 14th Avenue being Jones Street at that time.

Over the years periodic additions were made to the original structure. In 1899 the building was remodelled and served the congregation until a new church was built in 1912.

Gertrude Harvey Wright, daughter of Charles Harvey, was born in 1888. She remembers the first building:

*I can remember the church when I was a very little girl, five years old. They had bought this little place, and it's the same property that they are still on, but they have purchased the property around it. This church was very small then. They had a Tom Thumb wedding, and I remember going upstairs. They wanted to curl my hair and I was tired of 'em fooling with it. . . , and then we came down these stairs and into the church. The minister and his family lived upstairs. That was way, way back.<sup>5</sup>*

Still attending the church are four generations of Harvey descendants. Also counted among today's parishioners are descendants of other early members, such as the Gaytons, and Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson.

Gradually the congregation grew as the black population increased. Those who had not been admitted to the Church elsewhere were baptized in Lake Washington near the foot of Madison Street.<sup>6</sup> Following the baptisms the congregation boarded the cable car and rode to the church for Holy Communion and baby christenings. Pictured in this section is James, the firstborn of John and Magnolia Gayton, in his christening dress. His parents entertained the parishioners with a luncheon following his baptism on Easter Day of 1900.<sup>7</sup>

Membership statistics are at best sketchy. Growth was moderate in the first decade of the church's existence. Despite revivals to restore and save souls which would be added to the congregation, Mr. Cayton reports the total membership in 1901 as 53.<sup>8</sup> Information on salaries and other disbursements is also sketchy, but the pastor's salary in 1899 was \$16.25 a month plus \$10 per month support allowance.<sup>9</sup>



John Jacob Gayton was baptised at First A.M.E. Church in 1900.



The Frances Harper Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1900. Mrs. Emma Ray, fourth from left, second row; Mrs. Lucretia Roy, second from left, third row. Other known, but unidentified members: Mrs. Sykes, and Mrs. Elizabeth Thorne.

The need for funds was a major concern during the nineties. Somehow the congregation managed to keep up with the mortgage payments in the earliest years. By August of 1891 the purchase debt had been reduced to \$1000. But, despite a continuation of fund-raising activities throughout the first decade of its life, the Depression of the 1890s rendered the church incapable of keeping up its financial obligations. In June of 1898 it was reported that the debt was between \$600 and \$700.<sup>10</sup> A special edition of the *Seattle Republican* was issued in 1898 to help the church. The proceeds from the ads solicited by church members, minus production costs, went toward liquidation of the debt. Still outstanding in February of 1899 was the street assessment of \$134.70, due since 1891, and the sewer assessment of \$13.75, due since 1896.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout their struggles and anxiety they remained steadfast in their determination to continue the church, and here and there a sign of progress could be noted. After a white Seattleite, Thomas S. Lippy, returned to Seattle with the fortune he made in the Klondike, he bought the land where Lloyd and Emma Ray lived, in order to build Seattle General Hospital. In preparation for the building of the hospital, the Rays expressed their hope that the location would bring such blessings to the patients as they had enjoyed while living there. Mr. Lippy offered the lumber to Mr. Ray if he would tear down the house. This Mr. Ray did, donating the lumber to the A.M.E. Church, which used it for the building of their first parsonage in 1900. In 1901 the congregation set aside a Sunday to raise money for the benefit of the hospital.

While A.M.E. mission and outreach work was not very extensive, it was commendable for the size and financial condition of the church. They held an annual Educational Endowment Day for the benefit of black colleges. The Widow's Mite Missionary Society made small contributions to the welfare of widows and orphans.

Some of the most important work of religious women was done by the church's branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union which was organized in the early nineties. This group was called the Frances Harper Union in honor of the first published Aframerican novelist and abolitionist, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Mrs. Harper was formerly in charge of the W.C.T.U. work among Aframerican women throughout the country. Mrs. Emma Ray was the first president of the group of about 15 women. She was born a slave in Springfield, Missouri in 1859. After growing up in Missouri, she moved to Seattle with her husband, Lloyd, in 1889. The W.C.T.U. went out seeking sick people without regard to their religious affiliation. They sat with them, cleaned their homes, washed their clothes, scrubbed for them, did whatever tasks needed doing.

The Union held prayer meetings with their unconverted friends, and made believers of some of them, who later joined the A.M.E. Church.

**A special service will be held at the A. M. E. church, Jones street, tomorrow evening. It being educational endowment day. A number of songs will be sung appropriate for the occasion and a number of short addresses delivered.**

This announcement highlights one of the congregation's outreach efforts.

Some members visited jails, speaking to the prisoners of a "better way." Sometimes they were accompanied by honorary member Lloyd Ray, a former drinker, who would testify to his conversion. When the first county convention was held in Seattle, the A.M.E. Union entertained the delegates.

Unfortunately this little band, which was said by the main organization to have submitted better reports than any other county union, came under heavy criticism by the pastor during the mid-nineties.<sup>12</sup> He felt that "church work" was separate from what the Union was doing, and expressed displeasure with the churchwomen's involvement in its activities, which were not intended to eliminate the church's mortgage. His objections also included the class of people who were the beneficiaries of the Union's efforts. As they were people who lived below Yesler, an area generally considered to be a "red light district," he found fault with the women for concentrating their effort in that area. Some of the members became discouraged by his opposition, feeling that their first obligation was to the church. Resignations were given and finally the Union's work by A.M.E. women ceased. Mrs. Emma Ray continued the work by attending meetings of the white Unions.

The national convention of the W.C.T.U. was held in Seattle in 1899 and Mrs. Lucy Thurman, a nationally prominent Aframerican lady and National Temperance Union organizer among Aframericans, was in attendance. While here she was entertained by the Rays. She urged reorganization of the local Union and several of the most faithful women, some of them former members, created a new Union, once again electing Mrs. Ray as president. Her dear friend "Mother" Lucretia Roy was chosen secretary. This time they had the support of the pastor, a strong advocate of prohibition, and the Union remained strong and active until after the turn of the century.

Mrs. Ray continued with the Union until April of 1900 when she left Seattle to take up mission work in Kansas. By that time she had been selected as King County Superintendent of Jail and Prison Work for the Union.

Organizations such as the Sunday School continued strong throughout the church's history. Children's Day was a big annual event. The church was decorated with evergreens, flowers, flags, and bunting, and





Mrs. Nettie J. Asberry was the first organist of First A.M.E. Church.

there was usually a large number of people in attendance. The Sunday School children were given a prominent role in the program. Seated in the front pews, they took turns in the recitation of "pieces." Following their presentations the rest of the program included addresses such as "The Mission of the A.M.E. Church" given by Attorney Rideout, "Sunday School Union" by George Grose, or the pastor's address on "Church Extension as Applied by the A.M.E. Church." During one program Mrs. G. B. Hicks read her essay, "Lessons Taught by Flowers," and the pastor rendered an organ "voluntary."<sup>13</sup>

The church choir was an important group. Mrs. Nettie J. Asberry, best known for her long productive life in Tacoma, and in statewide Women's Club activities until the 1950s, was the first organist and musical director. A native of Leavenworth, Kansas, she arrived in Seattle in 1890 after receiving her doctorate degree in music from Kansas State Conservatory.

Some of the oldtimers at First A.M.E. still remember the contribution made by Mrs. Olivia Washington with her splendid soprano voice. She and her husband, Walter, were among the first members of the church.

On May 18, 1891 the Sunday School held the first of a series of annual picnics which continued until the 1930s.<sup>14</sup> The first picnic was held on the banks of Lake Washington. In later years Woodland Park

was the favored site, and the location that most present-day residents remember.

The Seattle Comet Band furnished music. After lunch the group took an excursion around the lake on a small steamship. That evening the Young Men's Aid Society held a program of comic dialogues, music recitations, and satirical imitations, and the Central Labor Union's hall was packed with black and white people. The evening was rounded out by a sumptuous meal with proceeds going towards the church's benefit.

Some of the other A.M.E. organizations of the church are mentioned for the record. Among them are the Trilby Club, an association of young ladies active during the mid-nineties; the A.M.E. Singing Society organized in the late nineties and consisting of members of the church choir, who sang for pleasure as well as worship; the Christian Endeavor Society begun in November of 1898, and admitted into the Seattle Society a short while later; and the willing workers who often gave church benefits, including their popular Chicken Pie Suppers.

Being the center of the social life of the community, it was at the church that newcomers met the established population. Following the establishment of the church, Charles Harvey and George W. Turner are reported to have met strangers at the railroad station and invited them to church, and to their homes for dinner.<sup>15</sup> Local news was exchanged as people got together for worship service as well as revivals, various entertainments and fundraising activities. All of the major holidays, except Independence Day, were celebrated with services at the church.

Instead of a service with a sermon on Thanksgiving Day of 1890, the church held an all-day reception, and dinner was served in the afternoon. Pastor Blakeney reminded the congregation that it had a special reason to be thankful as the parishioners had already paid more than \$500 on their church site.<sup>16</sup>

Christmas season celebrations were greatly enjoyed by the members, especially the children. There was usually a Christmas tree with gifts from parents and friends to be exchanged during the "Christmas Tree Exercises" on Christmas Eve. A well-laden Santa Claus appeared and distributed presents for all the Sunday School children. Everyone made a special effort to attend church on Christmas night to hear the story of the first Christmas, and to sing carols.

A special Easter program was held each year featuring the children dressed up in their spring finery. The program was followed by an offering, and the gathering of the children's Easter Boxes in which they had collected funds for missionary purposes. Marion Washington, daughter of Walter and Olivia Washington, won first prize for the highest total in 1901.

Visiting dignitaries often spoke at the church. In July of 1891 the Right Reverend Abraham Grant, Bishop of the A.M.E. Church, deliv-

ered a public address which was followed by a reception in honor of him. In September of that year the Rev. D. E. Johnson, a representative of Paul Quinn College of Texas, preached as part of his fund-raising tour of the Northwest. Evangelist Amanda Smith conducted a series of preaching meetings in February of 1898. During these visits national issues of concern to Aframericans were usually discussed. In the nineties the two main topics were the condition of the Aframerican population in the South, and the Emigration issue.

Both sides of the Emigration issue were presented as two of the most senior members of the church leadership held opposing views. Bishop Gaines was opposed to emigration, and Senior Bishop Henry McNeal Turner was an ardent supporter of a Return to Africa to found a nation colonized by Aframericans. Although Bishop Turner did not visit Seattle during this period, the Rev. Halford of the local church commended his labors and often spoke in support of the return to Africa. Bishop Gaines made an official visit here during the last week of August in 1899.

The church building was also used as a meeting place to discuss public issues closer to home. The Afro-American Council was formed there in October of 1900. Protest and indignation meetings were also held there.

The Puget Sound Conference of the A.M.E. Church was organized in 1891. It was composed of the Seattle Church, and those in Tacoma, Roslyn, Franklin, Spokane; Portland and Salem, Oregon; and Victoria, Wellington, and Salt Springs, British Columbia. In subsequent years it included churches in Idaho and Alaska. Several of its annual sessions were held in Seattle. Those were exciting times for the congregation as they prepared the church and their homes for the guests. A report, in listing women hostesses providing quarters for the delegates during the Second Annual Session, reads like a "Who's Who of the Church." They were Mrs. William Grose, Mrs. S. J. Collins, Mrs. Fred Lawrence, Mrs. Robert R. Brown, Mrs. Milton Roy, Mrs. George Grose, Mrs. Samuel

Mrs. Olivia Washington and her husband Walter were early A.M.E. Church members.



**SUNDAY  
EXCURSION**

Given by  
**African M. E. Church**

**\$1 ROUND TRIP \$1**

Will Take You To  
**Tacoma FROM Seattle**

Thus Allowing you all Day in the City  
of Tacoma to Visit the  
**Puget Sound A. M. E.  
Annual Conference**  
Which closes on that day.

**A Comedius Steamer**  
Has been Chartered for the Occasion,  
which will leave Seattle at 8 a. m.  
and will leave Tacoma  
at 10.30 p. m.

**Sunday, August 31st.**

**TICKETS.**  
Can be Purchased from the Pastor,  
**REV. M. SCOTT**  
Or at the Office of  
**The Seattle Republican**  
714 Third Avenue

Annual conferences were im-  
portant features of the church  
year in the Puget Sound area.

Burdett, Mrs. Hattie Poe, and Mrs. William Teamer. The majority of these women were also East Madison residents. The Teamers were early members of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

The conference dealt with management and administrative problems faced by the member churches. It also mediated disputes between pastors (who had been mandatorily assigned to churches) and congregations. In urgent cases a committee composed of church elders was dispatched between sessions.

Such an investigatory committee came to Seattle in July of 1895 after the congregation became embroiled in a widely-publicized dispute with the Rev. Allen A. Whaley which threatened to split the membership. The committee found Mr. Whaley guilty of: insubordination; pastoral interference; misappropriation of funds; and collecting money under false pretences. Mr. Whaley was then ordered to surrender his pastorate and ordination papers, pending a hearing at the annual conference the following September. The conference exonerated him of immoral conduct, but charged him with insubordination, and expelled him from membership in that body. Shortly after this action, Mr. Whaley announced his intention to enter Howard University to complete his law studies, and practice in Chicago while lecturing.

The Conference administered ordination examinations for deacons and ministers in the Church. S. J. Collins and J. P. Simmons were ordained deacons during the 1896 session in Seattle and ministers about 1898. It also heard petitions from individuals. In 1893 Brittain Oxendine spoke of his newspaper, and its difficulties, and asked the Conference for its prayers.

Cooperation with white Methodist Episcopal churches was non-existent, although Evangelist Amanda Smith and other visiting lecturers often shared their time between the A.M.E. Church and some of the former, particularly the Battery Street Church.

When the Annual Session of the Conference was held in Seattle in 1893 the A.M.E. and M.E. Conferences held a unified session. The A.M.E. delegates were welcomed by a standing M.E. Conference, as A.M.E. Bishop Lee was conducted to the presiding chair. Bishop Lee's half hour address was reported by the August 19, 1893 *P.I.* as a "fine illustration of extemporaneous eloquence, eagerly listened to, and to have profoundly impressed every one present." The A.M.E. District Conference, in turn, was visited by a group of white ministers in 1900.

The subject of the close cooperation of the A.M.E. and Baptist congregations always emerges in conversations with old-time Seattleites. Scheduling of events was carefully planned so that programs or entertainments were not held on the same date. This was especially true in the nineteenth century. Neither church was so strong numerically that it could successfully carry off an event without members of the other church. Besides, program participants were generally people from both congregations. Sundays could be quite full by the time people attended their regular church services, Sunday School, or a two o'clock program at one or the other church, and returned to an evening service at their home church. Other community organizations exercised care to avoid schedule conflicts with church activities as well.

Despite sectarian differences, pastors of both churches were respected, and sometimes honored, by the other church. The Rev. Allen Whaley lectured for the Mt. Zion Ladies' Auxiliary in January, 1895. In 1901 a benefit for the pastor of the A.M.E. Church was given at Mt. Zion Church.

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### **Colored Baptist Mission.**

**The colored Baptists of the city have established a mission, which will hold services every Sunday at 11 o'clock a. m. and 8 o'clock p. m. The meetings will be held in the Young Naturalists' hall in the old university grounds.**

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By 1895 a major depression had set in and the small struggling church became a mission that year.



The Young Naturalist's Hall (small building, right of center) at the University of Washington was the location of Mt. Zion Baptist Church throughout much of the 1890s.

### MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

Early records of Mt. Zion do not survive. The congregation celebrated its ninetieth anniversary on May 25, 1980. Some black Baptists attended the First Baptist Church, and are reported to have gradually separated themselves by forming prayer groups which met in various homes.<sup>17</sup> The Rev. Mr. Anderson is mentioned in the Grand Souvenir Program of the 23rd Anniversary of Mt. Zion Baptist Church as the prime mover in the organization of the church. The pastor and some members of the First Baptist Church are reported to have assisted Mr. Anderson.

In the days before the formal organization, a storeroom located at the corner of 14th and Madison was made available to the embryonic group.<sup>18</sup> At the time of their formal organization they were renting space at the Young Naturalists' Hall on the old University campus where the Cobb Building now stands.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church was formally organized February 18, 1894, and incorporated in 1903. Delegates present at the organizational meeting were: Judge Roger S. Green from the First Baptist Church, who presided; the Rev. Mr. H. C. Rice, a recently ordained minister of the Newcastle church which had been organized two months earlier; and the Rev. Thomas Smith of the First Colored Baptist Church of Tacoma. Members of the latter two churches were also in attendance.

The eight charter members were: B. F. Ward, Robert W. Butler, Mrs. E. W. Butler, Mrs. Eliza Washington, Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Clark. B. F. Ward was approved as deacon and moderator, R. A. Clark as deacon and treasurer, and R. W. Butler as secretary. Five of these members were admitted by letter from First Baptist Church and three by Christian Experience.<sup>19</sup>

The organizational service was held in the evening and Mr. Smith preached. The business procedures of the meeting were preceded by fervent prayers and long-metered hymns. The service closed with the large congregation singing "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand" as the whole congregation marched around the hall keeping time with the music, and extending the "right hand of fellowship" to all present.<sup>20</sup>

Prior to the organizational service Dr. Calvin M. Williams of Ft. Smith, Arkansas was invited to pastor the church. In the meantime services were conducted by the Rev. Rice and Mr. Butler, who were assisted by visiting ministers. Dr. Williams arrived in April.

In May, Dr. Williams began a series of revivals for the church. A fair-sized audience attended and he requested that those attending try to bring more black people to the meetings.<sup>21</sup>

The church continued in Young Naturalists' Hall for five years. Services were held at 11 o'clock and 8 p.m. on Sundays. Sunday School was held at three in the afternoon. A weekly prayer meeting was held Wednesday evenings at 8 o'clock.

Those early years were shaky as the small group struggled through the Depression. In September of 1894 the Rev. R.W. Jenerson became pastor and served for about two years. The church became a mission in 1895. The following year the Rev. Simons served for a few months. He was followed by the Rev. J. C. Program, who remained for about three years.

In April of 1899 the Rev. Eugene Harris, a 34-year-old theologian from Nashville, Tennessee, was sent here by the National Baptist Publishing Board to take charge of the mission with the goal of erecting a church building. In June of 1899 the mission moved to 16th and Madison Street, but by spring of 1900 they were meeting in a space at Second Avenue and Spring Street. In 1901 they were once again meeting at the Young Naturalists' Hall. Mr. Harris remained with them until 1900 when he went into business as a full-time stenographer. A state missionary, the Rev. J.P. Brown of Roslyn assumed tentative charge of the congregation until March of that year.

The Rev. J. B. Prince arrived in Seattle February 10, 1900 on assignment for the Home Missionary Society of the National Baptist Convention. In March he became pastor of Mt. Zion while continuing his assigned task. His presence there stimulated the congregation and they set





This 1934 photograph includes two of the founding members of Mt. Zion, Robert A. Clark, fourth from left, standing, and Anna Clark, third from left, front row. Mr. Albert Ratcliff, second from left, standing, is still an active member of the church.

about raising funds to build a church. Towards this end the members presented a round of socials and concerts.

While taking note of the church's difficulties in April, the *Republican* referred to Mr. Prince as appearing to be a "very able and praiseworthy gentleman." Appeals to the Home Missionary Society for appropriations to sustain him in his work with Mt. Zion were futile, but he decided to remain in Seattle as pastor. By May of that year the congregation had moved to Second and Spring. Sometime between May and July the congregation and the pastor came to a parting. In a letter published in the July 6, 1900 edition of the *Republican* Mr. Prince states:

*I shall not be able to do any more pastoral work, but must do the work I am sent to do. It has been reported that I deserted the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, but it is not true. They deserted me, so I am only left to carry out my mission.*

From Seattle, Mr. Prince moved to Newcastle where he became involved in Democratic politics by the fall of the year. He was succeeded by the Rev. George Maney who had served as pastor for a short while before leaving Seattle to live in New Mexico. He returned to the city and bought a home here in the spring of 1900, and assumed leadership of the church in 1901.



Theologian Eugene Harris came to Seattle in 1899 to erect a church building for the Mt. Zion Baptist congregation.

The Ladies Aid Society was very energetic. It staged most of the benefits and fundraising projects. In July of 1901 they realized their efforts to establish a literary society, which they felt would bring people throughout the community into a closer relationship. The Evergreen Literary Society, composed of the Baptists and their friends, was one of the most popular organizations of the early 20th Century. They were an imaginative group, and brought hours of enjoyment to the black community with their lectures, dramas, and concerts.

As in the Methodist church, the choir and the Sunday School were integral parts of the Baptist church. By 1900 a Christian Endeavor unit had been formed at the church also. The Washington State Baptist Association was formed at Newcastle during the weekend of May 25, 1900. Mt. Zion was a founding member.

Worship services of both churches were often emotional. Mrs. Ray, in telling the story of her conversion, gives a detailed account of the religious practices during revivals at the A.M.E. church in the early nineties.<sup>22</sup> Preachers' pleas for the souls of the unsaved were echoed by a chorus of "amens," individual hand-clapping, and one or two persons springing to their feet and breaking out with a song.

The tone of the service generally depended on the minister. If he rapped on the pulpit, clapped his hands, moved about, shouted and wailed in the course of a sermon, his audience generally responded in a similar manner.

In the few written accounts of religious services, descriptions include "rousing praise service," "fervent prayers," "old-fashioned sermon," "old down South camp meeting hymn," all of which tend to highlight the less restrained character of some of the meetings. In both churches sermons were fundamentalist in conviction, liberally sprinkled with strong metaphorical anecdotes, and often interminable.

The fellowship enjoyed inside the church was carried into daily life, and members of both the Methodist and Baptist church formed a close-knit society. Some of the most enduring friendships among people living today grew out of close relationships formed by families who were members of the churches in the 19th Century.

While most ministers served short terms, both churches had several well-educated pastors, some of whom had extensive practical and theological experience. Mr. L. S. Blakeney, a former slave who fought in the Civil War, was a graduate of the Gammon School of Theology in Atlanta. He had pastored in other places before coming to Seattle. In 1900 the Rev. J. Allen Viney, pastor of the A.M.E. church in 1894, became president of Wilberforce University, an A.M.E. institution in Ohio.

Mr. Allen Whaley was an honor graduate of Boston University. An able speaker, he had lectured in various parts of the United States and Canada prior to coming West. He had also been tendered professorships at Wilberforce University and in the Education Department of the A.M.E. Church.<sup>23</sup> Before coming to Seattle he had pastored churches in the East and at Coos Bay, Oregon.

During the eight years prior to his arrival in Seattle, Mr. Eugene Harris taught in the Theology Department of Fisk University at Nashville, and pastored a church there for two of those years. Some of the sociological reports of his work among Aframericans in Tennessee were published in the U.S. Department of Labor bulletins during the nineties.<sup>24</sup> Mr. J. B. Prince earned both D.D. and M.D. degrees before he was assigned to Seattle.

Although most churchgoers worshipped at the African Methodist Episcopal, or the Baptist, churches, a few were members of largely white denominations. Some records of their affiliations, prior to the establishment of black churches, survive. More than half of the founding members of Mt. Zion were members of the First Baptist Church. Rebecca Grose was wed to Robert Dixon in 1883 by the pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church. When she died in January of 1890, she was buried with Roman Catholic rites conducted by the Reverend Father Prefontaine, Seattle's first Catholic priest.

Trinity Church records show that the Freeman family was affiliated with that parish by 1875. In December of that year James Routter Barron married Jannetta Freeman at the home of her parents, Thomas

and Rosanna. T.P. Freeman was buried with Episcopal rites in 1900 as was Rosanna in 1913. Their son, Alfred, probably reared an Episcopalian, was on the first Board of Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, however. There were other communicants of this faith as well. The *Republican* reports two persons buried by the Episcopal church in 1900 in addition to Mr. Freeman.

On Passion Sunday of 1899 Mrs. Theresa Dixon, her daughter Christine Mabel, and her son, Chester, were confirmed in St. Clement's Episcopal Church, becoming the only African family in the parish at the time.<sup>25</sup> The youngest child of that family, Theresa Dixon Flowers, who was baptized an Episcopalian in infancy, says:

*They were at St. Clement's because we lived over that way, in a little house on 20th and Jefferson. I was christened at Trinity in 1894. My name is Theresa Virginia. Mr. Bell [founder of Belltown] had some daughters, and Miss Virginia Bell was my godmother, and I'm named for her, Theresa Virginia. Virginia Bell stayed with me until I went through confirmation at Trinity Church. I. I. Walker was my godfather.*<sup>26</sup>

The Mergusson family were members of the predominantly white Madison Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Others visited, if not actually belonged to, the Battery Street Methodist Episcopal Church.

Theresa Dixon Flowers was baptised at Trinity Episcopal Church in 1894.





Zacharias Woodson and his son, Fred, enjoyed the attractions of Woodland Park during a Sunday School picnic about 1903.

Several factors influenced the choice of churches. Mattie Vinyerd Harris remembers attending a mission in her Eagle Street neighborhood and participating in Christmas, and other special programs around the turn of the century.<sup>27</sup> She and her family attended because it was nearby. The Rays, finding themselves increasingly isolated from the African Methodists because of their beliefs, became Free Methodists in 1899. Under the sponsorship of the Free Methodist Church they became leaders of the Olive Branch Mission's Sunday night services in Pioneer Square.

Today First A.M.E. and Mt. Zion are still the spiritual and social centers for a large number of black people. It is no accident that churches were so intimately involved in the Civil Rights struggle of the 1960s. Many resident Seattleites remember training and morale boosting sessions in Seattle churches, particularly First A.M.E., during those tumultuous years. And First A.M.E. was in the forefront of organized support of the Black Panther Party's children's free breakfast program. The Ethnic School housed at Mt. Zion continues the tradition of teaching Black History and Culture, as well as religion. Even those who do not adhere to any particular religious belief still have respect for the importance of the Black Church in the history of the Black Experience in this city and throughout the country.

## 9 Organizations

*The problem facing our people here in  
America is bigger than all other  
personal or organizational differences.  
Therefore, as leaders, we must stop  
worrying about the threat that we  
seem to think we pose to each other's  
personal prestige, and concentrate our  
united efforts toward solving the  
unending hurt that is being done daily  
to our people here in America.*

Malcolm X, March 12, 1964  
*A Declaration of  
Independence*

Membership in organizations and clubs was a favorite pastime of Americans in the 1890s. It was also a source of a great deal of pride among Seattle's black population. But the appeal of such affiliations went much deeper than mere entertainment. Next to the church, and sometimes in place of it, the club, league or lodge provided a sense of "belonging" to people who were traditionally excluded from other aspects of society. Through their membership and rites in fraternal and social associations, Blacks were also in control of their own affairs. While recognizing that politics was another means of white people's manipulation of them, they continued to seek inclusion in those activities, hoping to gain some advantages. Interest in politics was widespread, but the extent of their participation was dependent upon the benefit to be derived by parties which were completely controlled by white men. So membership in black organizations was another means of reaffirming self-worth.

In Seattle the organizations ranged from those with serious economic or political purposes to those which simply provided an opportunity for

### ***Colored Knights of Pythias.***

The first Knights of Pythias lodge in the state composed of colored men has been organized in this city, with the following list of officers: Supreme chancellor, J. C. Blocker; vice chancellor, I. I. Walker; past chancellor, J. C. Coleman; secretary, George Gross; treasurer, W. D. Highwarden. The lodge will be set apart from the association the latter part of next week. A meeting was held last night to arrange for a hall and other matters of detail.

The Knights of Pythias organized in 1890.

members to amuse themselves in a friendly atmosphere. Quite often affiliations overlapped. Members of Masonic orders were on the rolls of literary societies, or members of self-help organizations joined singing societies or music clubs.

The organizations of the late Victorian period were mainly concerned with fellowship, and with the more practical consideration of aid in times of need, or the guarantee of a decent burial, with some security for the deceased member's family. But some were concerned with the amelioration of conditions which made life especially difficult for black people of the period.

Although a Republican Club was organized in 1888, it was not until 1890, following a large increase in population, that nonpolitical clubs were organized which included a widespread membership drawn from persons of various occupations and political leanings.

Mutual assistance lodges were very popular in the 1890s when insurance and governmental aid were not established practice. The Knights of Pythias was one of several such associations which had branches throughout the country. In July of 1890 A. O. Carter of Victoria, B.C., who was the Deputy Supreme Chancellor of the Aframerican Knights for Washington State, came to Seattle and instituted a Lodge with thirty charter members.<sup>1</sup> This local branch was designated Northern Lights Lodge, #1. Its main feature was the guarantee of \$300 to the widow of any active member at the time of his death. Among the early members were James S. Murray, William Kain, James C. Blocker, Blaikstone Walker, and James A. Coleman.

The Sons of Enterprise was another early group. Very little is known about their actual purpose but some reports of their special celebrations do survive. What is known among black Americans as "Juneteenth" was observed in Seattle for the first time, by this group, on June 19, 1890, in celebration of the adoption of the 15th Amendment.<sup>2</sup> Black families



from Seattle and Tacoma met at Kent for a huge picnic and "glorification" festivities. Plans of the Seattle group included a march from Pike Street to the Northern Pacific depot, accompanied by a band which would furnish marching music to the depot, and at the picnic grounds. It was joined by an orchestra composed of local people. Principal speaker for the day was the Rev. L. S. Blakeney who delivered an address on the 15th Amendment, followed by others who spoke on the progress of Aframericans.

In many places and later this century in Seattle, the American Emancipation was celebrated on this day. It originated from the various dates that slaves in different locales learned of the Emancipation, and the assumption that by June 19, 1863 black people throughout the South had learned of their freedom.

The next year in July the Sons of Enterprise chartered a train to Maple Leaf for a picnic attended by 150 people. The Queen City String Band furnished music. There was dancing and large amounts of food including turkey, chicken, ice cream and lemonade.

## EMANCIPATION DAY.

**It Will Be Celebrated on an Elaborate Scale—Officers Elected and Committees Appointed at a Public Meeting.**

At a meeting of the colored citizens last night for the purpose of organizing to celebrate the emancipation proclamation on the 1st of January, about 25 or 30 citizens assembled in C. A. Rideout's office in the Roxwell block. William Gross was elected president, F. Lawrence vice president, A. Z. Hester secretary, and W. C. Beals assistant. Committees were appointed as follows:

**Resolutions—P. F. Ford, J. A. Coleman, R. A. Clark.**

**Arrangements—G. H. Gross, W. H. Teemer, E. D. Alexander, R. W. Butler, J. A. Coleman, W. C. Beals.**

Commemoration of the Emancipation was celebrated annually in Seattle from 1890 until after the turn of the century.

On the 24th of June 1891, the Cornerstone Grand Lodge of the York Masons was organized.<sup>3</sup> Its leadership consisted of Dr. Sam Burdett, Con A. Rideout, B. F. Forde, William Grose, and William S. Huffman.

***Sons of Enterprise Enjoy Themselves.***

The Sons of Enterprise, colored, to the number of 150, left Seattle at 1:10 p. m. on a special train yesterday and went to Maple Leaf. The Queen City string band furnished the music, and President B. Oxendine, who always assures a good time, saw that all hands had a jolly good time. There was dancing and an abundance of chicken, turkey, ice cream, lemonade and other refreshments. The party left Maple Leaf at 7:30 o'clock to return to Seattle, having thoroughly enjoyed the day.

"Juneteenth" was first celebrated in Seattle in 1890.

For the small upper economic segment of the black community, membership in Masonic orders provided some assurance of illness and death benefits and it was also an important form of entertainment which ranged from attending meetings to dancing at grand balls. Members paraded downtown on March 1, 1892 during the visit of the National Grand Master.<sup>4</sup> They were in full regalia with officers riding in carriages preceded by the Queen City Band. It was a display worthy of the guest, Capt. W. D. Matthews, one of the few black men commissioned in the regular army of the United States during the Civil War. He was said to be the last survivor of John Brown's Underground Railroad.

Queen of Sheba Court, #1 was the female counterpart of the Cornerstone Grand Lodge. It consisted of the wives, daughters, and other female relatives of the Masons. Both men and women held their meetings in rooms rented in the Young Naturalists' Hall on the old University of Washington campus.

Following the onset of the Depression, the lodge surrendered its charter about 1893.<sup>5</sup> Cessation of Masonic activities did not continue for long, as Cayton mentions the AM and FM lodge in 1896, and he mentions some debates between orders of the Scottish Rite and York Rite Masons over the legitimacy of each in 1901.<sup>6</sup>

Although there was no report of tension between black and white Masonic orders or public debate regarding the legitimacy of the former, Gideon Bailey and Con A. Rideout went to the Grand Lodge of the State of Washington in 1898, and demanded recognition by the white lodges. Based on findings of an investigative committee of the Grand Lodge, the Aframerican Masonic Lodge was recognized as a legitimate body.<sup>7</sup>

# Watch and Wait

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The Last of the Old Year

A Grand  
Public

## INSTALLATION

—AND—

## SUPPER

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Washington Lodge No. 49  
A. F. & A. M.

---

G. A. R. HALL  
Tuesday Evening, Dec. 24  
1901

Some of the grandest affairs were sponsored  
by the Masonic orders.

Good Music

This report and recognition so offended certain southern Lodges that the Kentucky Grand Lodge adopted resolutions recommending the cessation of any communication with its Washington State counterpart. A spokesperson for the latter was quoted as saying "if Kentucky can do without us, we can do without them."<sup>8</sup>

The Mt. Rainier chapter of the Order of Odd Fellows was formed in April of 1892.<sup>9</sup> John F. Cragwell was its chief promoter. The first president was J. E. Hawkins.

The Supreme Altar of the Ancient Order of the Sons and Daughters of Ham was formed in January of 1893.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Burdett was its main organizer. Principal objectives of the corporation were the "mental, moral and physical education and elevation of the African race." It also provided life insurance for its members.

# LECTURE.

In compliance with the earnest solicitation of many who heard my previous lecture, and others who were unable to attend, I have concluded to go over the same ground again, in two separate lectures, introducing many new and original ideas, at

## YESLER'S HALL

ON

**Thursday and Friday Evenings at  
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The following subjects will be discussed and explained:

**The Two Gods—How False Teaching and Belief Affects the Mind of Men—The False and True Teachings—The Caucasian Religion and the Danger of its Teachings—The Actions of Leading Nations Reviewed—How a Great Collision of the Inhabitants of the World is to be Avoided.**

To bring these lectures within the reach of all, admission fee has been fixed at 25 cents.

**T. P. FREEMAN.**

Black thought was first articulated by T.P. Freeman in December of 1879.

In 1887, after surveying the deterioration of the Aframericans' situation ten years after the end of Reconstruction, *New York Age* publisher T. Thomas Fortune stressed the need for a nonpartisan organization to fight increasing racial discrimination and the erosion of 14th and 15th Amendment rights in the South.

Following a convention held in Chicago in January, 1890, the National Afro-American League was formed. The local branch was the most

important effort of Seattleites in the late 19th century to organize as a forum on the pressing problems of discrimination and deprivation of the rights of Blacks. Unfortunately, only very sketchy details of their activities survive.

Seattleites had expressed their opinions before, but only as individuals. The first record of this expression was the lecture in which T.P. Freeman gave before a local white audience of townspeople, loggers, sailors, laborers and others gathered in Yesler's Hall on December 4, 1879. Those black people exposed to black ministers often heard discussions about their greatest concern of all — the survival of the race in an increasingly hostile environment. Ministers often mixed themes of black pride and racial survival with vividly illuminated sermons.

In May, 1890, the first local branch of the Afro-American League was organized and incorporated in Seattle.<sup>11</sup> Elected as president was Isaac W. Evans, who later that year, became Seattle's first black policeman.

One of the first official acts of the League was to empower the executive committee to call upon the central committees of the Republican and Democratic parties to demand recognition of the black voter.<sup>12</sup>

The committees were dispatched by the League in 1891 to Franklin to investigate pay and working conditions and the fulfillment of promises made to newly arrived miners.<sup>13</sup> About June 11, 1891 I. W. Evans returned to Franklin to encourage the formation of a League there.<sup>14</sup> Its organization a few days later, composed of 110 members, made it the largest division in the state.

By that time there were five branches of the Afro-American League in the state, two of which were in Seattle. Later that month, the State League was formed at Spokane during its convention. Canadian-born Gideon S. Bailey of Franklin was elected State President. A Union Army veteran, he had helped recruit men for the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, men so determined on freedom and equality for black people that they fought for a whole year without pay, rather than accept a discriminatory wage. He was reelected at the first annual convention held in Seattle on April 13 and 14, 1892.<sup>15</sup> Three Seattle men were chosen for office that year. I. I. Walker was elected one of the vice-presidents, Brittain Oxendine became foreign correspondent and secretary of the Bureau of Information, and Allen A. Garner was attorney for the group. All speakers at the convention upheld the exclusion of politics from League business.

In his address, President Bailey briefly sketched the history of the race and the hardships borne in its struggle for independence. Expressing his apparent satisfaction with his first year in the state, he also praised Washington because of its varied industries and resources, indicating that the area was a desirable location for black people, where members of the race enjoyed greater personal freedom than elsewhere.

### **York Rite Masons.**

**The Queen of Sheba court of the Corner Stone grand lodge of the ancient York rite Masons gave a very pleasant entertainment in their lodgeroom last evening. The newly-elected officers are Miss White, most ancient matron; Mrs. Ford, deputy ancient matron; Mrs. Dr. Shadd, inner gatekeeper; Mrs. Hughes, outer gatekeeper; Miss Williams, secretary; Mrs. Frederick Lawrence, treasurer.**

Female relatives of Masons organized in 1891.

To facilitate communication of this information to black people in the South, he urged the convention to establish Bureaus of Information in local Leagues and to promote a State Bureau of Foreign Correspondence. Both ideas were adopted by the convention.

Included in the League's objectives were the protection of all human rights and the promotion of the welfare of the race. One interpretation of the objectives also extended to public rebuttal of racist attacks against Aframericans nationally, such as the published denunciation in 1892 of boxer John L. Sullivan's disparaging remarks about black people.<sup>16</sup>

In an address given before a local League meeting Mr. Bailey pledged that as State President he would use every effort to see that there would be a representative of the League at the next Republican State Convention in Olympia. At the same meeting resolutions were drafted to support John N. Conna of Tacoma, who was then involved in a restaurant discrimination suit. One of the resolutions pledged to secure additional legal counsel for Mr. Conna if necessary.

Despite the League's position on the exclusion of politics as a subject of consideration, various speakers would not refrain from such talk in their addresses. This was particularly true of John Conna, a popular speaker who made annual speeches during the League's existence.

So fuzzy were the lines between politics and non-partisanship in the League that several men of Republican leanings were induced to join the Democratic Party in the belief that it was a branch of the Afro-American League. Upon publication of their names as new Democratic Club members, they hastily withdrew and joined the Young Men's Colored Republican Club.<sup>17</sup>

In late 1892, a third branch of the League was formed in Seattle by Louis Martin, Allen Garner, A. McDonald, W. J. Meadows and Andrew Lewis. It was strongly Democratic in leaning and shortlived.

In Seattle the destructive contentions and squabbles along party lines, the efforts to align the League to one party or another, and ultimately lack of popular support brought about its demise. The last



Local residents at leisure about 1900.

meeting of the longest surviving unit took place just before a city election, on March 20, 1894. The hall was packed with many curious onlookers who had come to watch the widely-rumored attempt by T. C. Collins and other Democrats to take over the meeting and pass resolutions which would, in effect, establish the League's commitment to the Democratic Party. After lengthy debate the body refused to accept resolutions put forth by its Democratic members who left before the League unanimously adopted three resolutions. The group denounced and called for ostracism "from fellowship and association with the Negro citizens of Seattle" those men reported to have offered to influence black votes for a fee. It also stated the League's refusal to support any candidate reported to have attempted bribery of black voters, and pledged as a League to vote the full Republican ticket. The group also voted to adjourn for an indefinite period.<sup>18</sup>

The needs that had given rise to the organization continued despite its dissolution. Sporadic efforts were made to address the more urgent problems by calling meetings and conventions, but these did not result in permanent organizations. While there is information available on only one convention, no change is known to have come about in the



area of the earlier League concerns except for a few political concessions initiated by black party members. Special committees were formed to plan Emancipation Day observances, or protest meetings. An aid committee raised funds to relieve families of black miners killed in the 1894 Franklin mine disaster. In 1895 a committee sponsored a memorial program in honor of Frederick Douglass following his death.

The black population continued its slow steady growth, although it was affected by the paralyzing depression suffered nationwide beginning in 1893. Distressed by the lack of progress and the desperate financial difficulties of many members of the race, a meeting was held on June 8, 1894 to consider the critical economic situation of Aframericans statewide. A steering committee called for a delegated convention to meet in Seattle on July 3, 1894.<sup>19</sup> Members of the committee were: I. W. Evans, T. C. Collins, Allen Garner, J. A. Coleman, I. I. Walker, G. S. Bailey, Gus Whitney, and Louis Diggs. All of these men were formerly active in Afro-American League branches in Seattle, Franklin, and the State Association. The number of representatives to the convention was based on the ratio of the populations of Seattle, Franklin, and Newcastle, as well as one delegate from all other areas where black people lived.

The July 3, 1894 convention grew out of a belief that "interests of all Negroes are identical."<sup>20</sup> Questions relating to the advancement of the race were discussed, and political questions were omitted. No definite action resulted from the meeting.

Other meetings were held to consider the plight of the black population during the mid-90s, but it was not until 1899 that Local Council #1 of the National Council of Afro-Americans was organized. Its objectives were practically indistinguishable from those of the Afro-American League.

Elected as its first president, Con A. Rideout stated that the Council's special objective was to work for the general good of the Aframerican.<sup>21</sup> He also stated that Blacks were not receiving their just recognition in several areas and that the object of the council should be the correlation of these wrongs. On the issue of restriction of suffrage in the South, he said "we are not opposed to the legitimate restriction of the suffrage, but we insist that restrictions shall apply alike to all citizens of all states."<sup>22</sup>

The first official act of this body was to designate a committee to visit merchants and ask for the hiring of Aframerican clerks or janitors. The committee members were Con A. Rideout, G.S. Bailey, and John F. Cragwell.

Various other issues were debated, particularly lynching atrocities in southern states. Gideon Bailey, by now a Seattle resident, continued his

campaign to spread the news of Washington as a refuge for down-trodden southern brethren. In what was apparently the last meeting of the group, only three months after its organization, a memorial to Congress, requesting reduction of southern representation from those states disenfranchising black voters, was drawn up and filed.

The first meeting was well attended, but subsequent ones were not, and in some cases meetings were cancelled because of poor turnout. From the beginning there was a division of opinion on important issues, and politics was often dragged into Council affairs although this group, like its predecessor, was planned as nonpolitical.

The need for a strong protective organization locally was forcibly brought home to the black community by the action of the chief of police near the end of December, 1899. Following a series of incidents involving female pickpockets, many of them black, an order was issued that any black woman suspected by patrolmen of being a pickpocket was to be arrested. Needless to say some respectable women were arrested and a storm of protest emanated from the community. Meetings were held at the Sleeping Car Porters' Club and at the A.M.E. Church, and strong resolutions were drawn up for presentation to the police.

The Afro-American Council was reinstituted at a meeting at First A.M.E. Church in early October of 1900. Nine men came together after D. W. Griffin, editor of the *Seattle Bee*, issued a call for an effort to form a nonpolitical organization for the betterment of conditions affecting the race.<sup>23</sup> This effort seems to have been stillborn as there is no further mention of its activities by the *Republican* or daily news media.

There were several organizations about which little more than a name survives. The Manhattan Club was in existence in 1892. The Young Men's Social Club was incorporated with capital stock of \$2000 from \$1.00 shares sold in December of 1894.<sup>24</sup> The Queen City Club was organized in May of 1895 as a business and social club with reading rooms.<sup>25</sup> Its capital stock was \$1000 in one hundred shares. A fully stocked library and reading room was the main feature of the Kingston Club which was organized in July of 1899.<sup>26</sup> It continued into the first decade of the present century.

During the 1890s there was an escalation in the loss of constitutional rights of black people in the South and large numbers lost their lives as well. There were more than 150 lynchings a year during that decade, mostly in the South. Rape or attempted rape was usually the charge leveled against the accused, but women, sometimes pregnant, and children were also murdered by mobs. According to Tuskegee figures published in Aptheker, 6235 people, mostly black, were lynched between 1892 and 1900.<sup>27</sup>



James Shepperson, Kittitas County labor recruiter in the 1880s and 1890s, was one of the founders of the Seattle branch of the International Council of the World in 1901.

By the turn of the century, lynchings were reported in minute detail by the newspapers. Alarmed by the proportions of such violence and with some trepidation about their own vulnerability, particularly in the mining areas where there were visible concentrations of black men and some racial tension, a group of men formed a branch of the International Council of the World in January of 1901.<sup>28</sup> Among the founding member and officers were Dr. Samuel Burdett, John L. Gibson, and James Shepperson of Roslyn. During their meetings they passed resolutions offering a \$500 reward for the apprehension and conviction of each person implicated in the death of a lynching victim. They also called upon other council units throughout the country to cooperate with their effort. Time and again resolutions were passed and copies sent to the governors of such states as Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas and Kansas, the chiefs of police of various towns in those states, and to the sheriffs of their counties.

In April of 1901 the Council adopted a general resolution of a standing reward of \$7500 for the apprehension and conviction of up to five individuals responsible for the murder of a black person. A copy of the

# A TEST OF **Lynch Law**

**An Expose of Mob Violence**  
**AND**  
**THE COURTS OF HELL**  
**Published by SAMUEL BURDETT**

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A chronology of lynching in the United States was published by Dr. Burdett in 1901.

resolution was sent to Washington's Governor Rogers whose private secretary replied, acknowledging its receipt and noting that the resolution would be filed "and given due consideration should the occasion require."<sup>29</sup>

The resolution had been preceded three months earlier by the introduction of a bill which contained guaranteed protection of Aframericans in the state from mob violence. The lengthy title embodies the purpose and intent of the bill. The full title was "An Act Providing For the Removal of Prisoners Accused of Rape or Murder — Committed in the Perpetration or Attempt to Perpetrate a Rape, Where There is Great Excitement Among the Citizens of the County Where the Crime Has Been Committed — to the State's Prison, Giving Authority to the Warden To Hold the Prisoner at the Expense of the State, Changing the Venue Upon the Petition of the Attorney for the Prisoner and

Declaring an Emergency."<sup>30</sup> Behind the movement for this measure were G. S. Bailey, R. B. McDonald, T. C. Collins, and D. W. Griffin, among many others.

In seeking support for the bill, petitions were circulated stating that signers "believe that the spirit of our Constitution favors giving to each and every citizen a fair and impartial trial and the protection of the law."<sup>31</sup>

Despite the importance of this bill to the black population of the state, the measure failed on the third reading in the House.

The Fraternal Order of Hawks was formed in November of 1899 after an energetic drive by Edward Hawkins and D. W. Griffin.<sup>32</sup> It promoted benefits for sick and needy members, and it began with an enrollment of 82. Its first officers were President, J. Edward Hawkins, Vice President, Walter Beale, Treasurer, Carson Miller, Recording Secretary, C. O. Kincaid, Financial Secretary, Clarence Mallory, and D. W. Griffin, Grand Lecturer and Organizer.

During the latter 19th century, a few men belonged to predominantly white organizations. Green Fields and G. S. Bailey were members of the Grand Army of the Republic, a society of men who served in the Union Forces during the Civil War. Mr. Bailey is buried in the GAR cemetery on Howe Street.

The first provision for membership in the American Protective Association was "Loyalty to true Americanism which knows neither birthplace, race, creed or party."<sup>33</sup> The organization was strongly against foreigners, and particularly vehement against Catholic immigrants. In 1895, Dr. Samuel Burdett was the president of this group, and T.C. Collins was a member during much of its existence.

A few individuals moved beyond the formal structures of groups and expressed themselves through other channels. By the end of the period Susie Revels Cayton had resumed her writing, some of which was published in the *P.I.* In 1900 Dr. Burdett published his booklet which recorded 20 years of lynching in the United States, which according to the *Republican*, included the probable guilt or innocence of each victim.<sup>34</sup> Several newspapers made their appearance in the late 1890s in which local issues of concern were debated and which sometimes challenged the local population to act forcefully in their own interest.

Although most organizations did not survive into the new century, groundwork had been laid for organizing for specific purposes. A few groups, particularly fraternal orders, continued for many years after the turn of the century, and the Prince Hall Masons continue today. Persons with experience in organizations during the nineties became members of new groups which sought the uplifting of the race in the twentieth century.

## 10 Politics

*"We owe to ourselves the duty to be  
more independent and not to vote  
blindly, and we must stand as men and  
be capable of demanding positions  
which we should be able to fill  
afterwards."*

J. E. Johnstone, speech  
to the W. D. Bynum  
Democratic Club,  
January 24, 1892

The Aframerican interest in politics blossomed during the years following the Civil War. Many black men actively participated in the Republican Party in various states with Reconstruction governments. Some of them were former slaves, while others came from northern states and in a few cases, as far away as Canada, to serve in state government, federal offices, or as school teachers in the South.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, Blacks' positions in the North remained unchanged, and in some cases, deteriorated, after the War. White workers, particularly in skilled trades, viewed Blacks as competitors and barred them from most labor unions. Tensions between the two groups resulted in violent clashes in both northern and southern states. Unscrupulous northern businessmen imported black southerners to break strikes or depress wages after the War. Such actions increased division between the two groups.

Widespread black participation in southern governments was short-lived. By 1876 white supremacist officials were in charge of all but three state governments in the South.<sup>2</sup> Efforts at disenfranchisement became increasingly successful, and the reign of terror against black people, particularly those with courage enough to want to hold office, or even to vote, gained momentum in the southern states.

Political activity among Blacks in Seattle was limited to the vote until 1888. Some of the most eager participants were from the South. Their experiences and allegiances in their former homes shaped their expectations here. Ironically, the political status of some individuals was reduced from that enjoyed previously in some southern states. A few 1890s residents had held offices in the South prior to coming to Seattle. Many Blacks voted and participated in local campaigns, but they received only token recognition for their efforts. Throughout the period their numbers were so small that had they not voted or participated at all, the political process in Seattle would have rolled on without perceptible differences. Nor were they so well off as individuals or a group, that they could make substantial financial contributions and thus affect policy. And always part of the scenario was the widespread prejudice against Aframerican members of political parties.

The primary reason for Aframericans' continued support of the Republican party was their sense of loyalty and obligation to the party which had secured their emancipation from slavery and extended citizenship to them. As the nineteenth century progressed, their lack of importance to that party became increasingly more obvious. But the inhumane treatment of their southern brethren under Democratic regimes left most people with no other choice but to vote Republican, even though their enthusiasm was diminished by that party's disregard of them.

An extension of the southern Democrats' attitude was displayed in Washington State as well. The election of John Randolph as King County delegate to the State Democratic Convention at Ellensburg in 1889 caused a furor.<sup>3</sup> The outcry from the other members of the convention, who objected to a black delegate, was so vehement that Mr. Randolph was represented by proxy. Earlier that year Democrats attending a meeting in Chehalis beat up a minstrel band marching in front of their meeting place.<sup>4</sup>

Near the end of the nineteenth century recognition and patronage became a focal point of the black man's political participation. As early as 1889 a group of Independents in various cities of the state had tried and failed to get a black man on the Republican legislative ticket. The following year they made similar overtures to the Democrats with the predictable negative results.

By 1890 advancement of the "interests of the colored race" through support of political parties, especially the Republican party, was the primary goal of Blacks. No longer satisfied with words and past deeds by the Republicans, they sought increasingly to change their status via political activity. As the right to vote was not challenged here, nor families disrupted by violence, jobs were a critical issue.



Gradually, over the decade from 1891 to 1901 Blacks were granted a few concessions, mainly in the form of appointments to places that added a bit of prestige to their standing in the black community, such as convention delegate, or some other position in which no Black had served before.

For a short while the Fusion Alliance appeared to offer some hope in this sphere, although it did not enjoy full black support. As their appointments of Blacks to jobs surpassed Democrats and Republicans, they may have gained broader support from that segment of the population had the Alliance remained a viable force into the new century.

There was a noticeable decrease in black political activities beginning in 1893 after the onset of the depression. During those hard times the main concern of the Aframericans was to hold on to their small homes and to put food on the table. Following the gold rush of 1897 there was a further decline in political activities.

### THE BLACK REPUBLICANS

On October 17, 1888, seventeen men called a meeting to organize a political club, following the organization of a similar club among white Republicans.<sup>5</sup> It was attended by 32 men. The impetus for the organization of Aframericans came from the men themselves. Several of those in attendance made speeches following one made by a white politician. According to the October 18, 1888 *P.I.* the speeches showed, "that the colored citizens of Seattle are still loyal to the party which has been their friend."

It was common practice for ward clubs to borrow ideas from the central or earliest established club in the city. The Aframerican club adopted the principles and bylaws of the newly established white Harrison and Morton Legion. They assumed the same name, prefixed by "Colored," in honor of Benjamin Harrison and Levi Parsons Morton, the candidates for President and Vice President that year.

Two nights later on October 19, 1888 the club joined the white Republicans at a big rally which was preceded by a march up and down First Avenue prior to the meeting. Their glee club was encored repeatedly, and was from that time on to become very much in demand around the county. They participated in the rallies and marches throughout the period, during which time several men along with representatives from other ward clubs, served as vice presidents of the rallies.

Throughout the period political clubs were organized during campaign years. The clubs were segregated along ethnic lines. There were German and Italian as well as Aframerican clubs. The club names differed from one campaign to the next, sometimes taking the name of the

## COLORED STATE DELEGATE.

### The County Convention Asked to Indorse Cragwell.

At a largely-attended meeting of the Young Men's Colored Republican Club of this city, held at Republican headquarters yesterday afternoon, the following resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority:

*Resolved,* That it is the sentiment of the Young Men's Colored Republican Club of the city of Seattle that the selection of suitable persons to be presented to the county convention as delegates to the state convention as representatives of the Afro-American voters be left to the colored delegates elected to the county convention of King county.

A memorial signed by I. I. Walker, G. G. Grose, J. Work, Rev. L. S. Blakeney, C. S. Jones, W. T. Walker and L. Shackelford calls upon the convention to indorse J. F. Cragwell as a colored delegate.

By 1891 black people were expressing their desires for recognition by the Republican Party.

political candidates, or some other prominent person, such as Frederick Douglass, or simply the Young Men's Colored Republican Club. The designation "colored" was usually employed in the title. Dr. Burdett appears to have affiliated mostly with local white ward clubs, but almost everyone else joined the one Aframerican club in existence during each campaign. A few attempts to integrate the local ward clubs were initiated by the black Republicans, but were unsatisfactory.

Following the formation of the Harrison-Morton Club Blacks were nominally involved in the political process. The consideration of John Conna as assistant sergeant-at-arms for the 1889 Senate came about as a result of black people around the state expressing a desire for recognition, and a feeling of obligation by some white legislators for Blacks' past support nationwide.<sup>6</sup> Only through the continued expectations expressed by their clubs and community leaders were Blacks given even the token recognition that they received. For several years after organization their requests were modest.

Contests for convention delegates and workers in the capital during legislative sessions provided a great deal of excitement. It was important to the black community to have a representative in some capacity in the capital during those sessions. For the Victorian period this meant placement in such jobs as porter, doorkeeper, and sergeant-at-arms. They sought and placed representatives in legislative sessions, local and state conventions, and tried to map strategies for the advancement of their interests in various campaigns. They also appointed workers in the various wards to check on black voters and encourage their participation in elections. Although the meetings sometimes lasted for hours,

they were necessary to formulate positions on candidates, and to a lesser degree, on issues. Speeches by Seattle members as well as Tacoma residents or local white politicians were prominent features of membership meetings.

The subject of political rewards was broached before statehood. The *P.I.* of September 5, 1889 quotes a report in the Democratic paper that Al Freeman was "promised and assured" a Customs Inspector's position under the Republican Territorial Administration which later withdrew the offer because other inspectors objected to Mr. Freeman's race.

A speech from Rudolph Scott of Spokane which was read to the first Senate session also reflects the feeling of Seattle's black community. In commending the Senate for its selection of John Conna as Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Scott mentions the debt owed to black men for their service in all the country's wars dating from the Revolution, and for their unwavering support of the Republicans since Emancipation.

Speakers at political meetings of the Seattle community reminded listeners that had the Aframerican vote not been nearly unanimous in 1888, the national Republican ticket would have been defeated. So by the latter years of the period, Blacks had become impatient with mere words and were expecting more substantive forms of recognition.

There was a certain reluctance among Republicans throughout the period to appoint or nominate black men for other than dirty rough jobs. This was seen readily on the state level in the consideration of James Orr for Messenger and Postmaster of the Senate in 1889. On September 11, 1889, the black Republicans met in the courthouse and organized a club, electing James H. Orr as its head. He was also their choice to serve in some capacity in the first Legislature. Although nominated for messenger and postmaster of the Senate he was defeated by an opponent who received more than twice as many votes. He was elected unanimously as porter of the Senate, instead. Black men from

#### **Conna Speaks to Colored Veterans.**

The colored voters of this city, comprising the Fred Douglass Republican Club, were addressed Tuesday evening by John H. Conna, Republican nominee for presidential elector, at a meeting held in the Hinchey building. Mr. Conna gave a thoughtful exposition of the fallacies of free silver and briefly referred to the prosperity of the country under Republican tariff legislation. The chairman of the evening was George Gross. It is understood that the colored voters are practically a unit for McKinley.

Tacoman John N. Conna, a former King County homesteader, often spoke at Seattle Republican Club meetings during the 1890s.



John F. Cragwell, and his grandson, Letcher Yarbrough about 1918.

throughout the state served in the Legislature from 1889, but they were, for the most part, confined to menial jobs. Discriminatory wages were also given black men during the 1889 session.<sup>7</sup> Though of little prestige, these jobs gave representatives of the community direct access to legislative proceedings.

A notable exception was made with the election of John Conna of Tacoma over two white contestants for Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms during the 1889 Legislative Session, and as Sergeant-at-Arms of the Extraordinary Session of the Senate and the regular session in 1890.<sup>8</sup> In the case of Mr. Conna, it provided access to the legislators as well, and Cayton

**J. Edward Hawkins, the young colored attorney, who had done a great deal for the Republican party, is a candidate for the position of one of the five United States commissioners for Alaska. He thinks that the place of commissioner for Kodiak would be about the proper thing.**

Blacks often stated their desires for recognition, but their requests were rarely granted.

credits him with the successful lobbying of the state's first Public Accommodations Act.<sup>9</sup>

While appreciating the opportunity to have eyes and ears present at the legislative sessions, black men also sought representation in the city, county, and state conventions. In 1892 a caucus was held to seek a representative to the state convention. Resolutions included the demand for at least one delegate and alternate to the state convention, and black delegates to the county convention as well. The resolution was later amended to demand that the black men choose their own delegate rather than leave the choice to the Republican party. Apparently members of other communities followed suit as there were three black delegates to the state convention that year with the Seattle group being represented by John F. Cragwell. Cragwell's appointment as a member of the central committee of the Seattle party, delegate to the county and state central committees in 1892, and his appointment by the governor to the State Barber's Commission in 1901 represents the beginning and the culmination of such appointments. The few in between these years were generally less prestigious. Both Republicans and Democrats nominated black candidates for wreckmaster in 1892, the Democratic nomination preceding that of the Republican. John A. Coleman was the Democratic nominee. Seaborn J. Collins, a native of Georgia, was the Republican nominee. He came to Seattle about 1885. A machinist and carpenter by trade, he was later ordained into the ministry of the A.M.E. Church. He was also a charter member of the first Aframerican Republican club. Winning the election handily, Collins became the first Black employed by King County. His job was to remove and dispose of accumulated timber along the waterfront.

Aframericans' expectations have consistently been higher than many whites think they should be. Rather than seeing the menial positions as fit work for black people, Aframericans viewed them as progressive steps toward ultimately taking their place among the decision-makers. Mr. Collins's election was a source of pride to them, but it was by no means the highest position to which they aspired. They sought representation in the conventions and as candidates for office in each succeeding election.

The presence of Blacks in county conventions did not make a difference when it came to nominations. In 1894 I. I. Walker announced his candidacy for constable with strong support from the black Republicans.<sup>10</sup> Despite fifteen delegates to the county convention, the largest number for the period, his request was not honored. John A. Coleman was nominated wreckmaster instead. Other black men requested consideration for constable, or announced their candidacy for it in the newspapers over the years, but none were ever nominated by the Republicans.

The party's refusal to accept Mr. Walker as candidate for constable moved Mr. Cayton to ask editorially in an August, 1894 edition of the *Republican*: "Where comes this temerity and general unwillingness for Republicans to support colored men in this county for official positions?"<sup>11</sup> In an explanation of the party's attempt to appease the anger of black Republicans at Mr. Walker's rejection, and without asking any black person, the *P.I.* of September 10, 1894 reports that Mr. Coleman was "enthusiastically approved" and that his selection "gave general satisfaction to the party at large and especially to the colored people." Several prominent Aframericans responded to this treatment by crossing over to Democratic ranks.

The *Republican*, trying to make the best of a frustrating situation, remarked on defections to Democratic ranks. It was quoted in the *P.I.* as saying: "It is much better to stay with a party with a few bad men than to go to a bad party with all bad men and still worse principles."<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Coleman was born a slave in Alabama. He migrated to New York City after the Civil War. Five years later he moved to Duluth, Minnesota where he worked in Republican Clubs, and came to Seattle in September of 1889. At the time of his nomination he was a porter in an office building. He lost the election by less than 500 votes.

Among the disillusioned were persons who had been active or officers in the earliest Republican clubs, including T. C. Collins and Attorney Allen A. Garner. John A. Coleman had left the party earlier, but returned to the Republican fold in 1894. By 1900 two of the most respected persons in King County, Gideon Bailey and the Rev. Eugene Harris, had become Democrats. Mr. Bailey explained his decision in part by stating "the only reason that I am a Democrat is because the Republicans have never given me an office."<sup>13</sup>

Some of the black Republicans left from a deep sense of injury, of being taken for granted, and exploited. The more thoroughly disenchanted dropped out of politics altogether. Others sought an independent political course, but a few sought participation elsewhere. Also, some tried to turn their cynicism into an advantage in gaining a job. Others swallowed their indignation and humiliation and maintained their loyalty to the Republican party. During this period, the rights of

Aframericans were constantly eroded and violated by white supremacists in the southern states who were overwhelmingly Democratic, so many people felt they simply did not have anywhere else to go but the Republican party.

Evidence of disillusionment was present by 1891. William Grose, who by his own admission, seldom meddled with politics or religion, was the man most respected in the black community. He was quoted by a *Telegraph* reporter in the August 15, 1891 edition as stating that black men were denied even the "lowest office in the gift of the city — the janitorship of city hall." Black Republicans had sought the position since January 1 of that year. The article stated that not one black person held work under the Republican administration. Mr. Grose, his son-in-law, Brittain Oxendine, and others had sought to gain realization of the promises made to the black supporters, but all to no avail.

The preamble and resolutions of the first Democratic Club plainly expresses the indignation of Seattle Blacks at the state of affairs in 1891. It also demonstrates some wariness of trusting others to further the interests and welfare of the race. The first sentence reads:

*Whereas, the colored citizens of the city of Seattle, being entirely overlooked according to their numerical strength; and whereas, the aforesaid Republican party treats us as vassals and not as citizens, therefore be it resolved, that we appeal to all the colored voters of the city of Seattle to renounce their allegiance to the aforesaid party . . . .*<sup>14</sup>

Some of the formulators were men who only one year before had been active in the Republican Club.

Although the gains were practically nil, Blacks continued to announce their candidacy for various offices. Ed Hawkins announced his candidacy for Commissioner of Kodiak, Alaska Territory in 1896.<sup>15</sup> Horace Cayton sought nomination for office during the county convention of 1898. He mentions in the May 4, 1900 edition of the *Republican* that recent daily papers carried an announcement by Hawkins for Justice of the Peace. Others sought positions and nominations by the Republicans, including the position of Deputy Sheriff in 1898, all to no avail. In 1900 the *Republican* reported the possibility of Dr. Burdett receiving the nomination for City Veterinary Surgeon. He was rewarded for his unswerving loyalty to the Republican Party, however, by his nomination for Wreckmaster. He easily won the contest.

Horace R. Cayton was a delegate to the 1896 national convention which nominated McKinley for president. While granting such tokens of recognition for their loyalty, the Republicans were reluctant to go further. Black men expressed desires to fill other positions from time to





Dr. Samuel Burdett fought in the Civil War. He was a veterinary surgeon, active Republican, and one of the founders of the International Council of the World, an anti-lynching organization.

time, but they were appointed or nominated largely to those positions which carried virtually no authority and which did not require dress clothes.

In 1896 a committee, consisting of Robert Dixon and I.I. Walker (George Grose was too ill to attend), called upon the Republican Central Committee to present grievances of black voters.<sup>16</sup> The central committee promised that some positions would be given them and that consultations would be held with representatives of the Aframericans during the approaching campaign. No meaningful positions resulted from this or subsequent meetings that followed, but their treatment was civil as contrasted to the brutal treatment of an Independent delegation in 1892 when they had been told, among other things, that when the Republicans had freed the Blacks they had done enough for them.<sup>17</sup>

While black men were members of a single Republican Club, their main purpose was to derive as many benefits for the race as possible. In order to do this they had to reach beyond their own clubs. Ed Hawkins urged the Club in 1892 to work to secure good candidates who would state explicitly the recognition they would grant to Aframericans, and who would keep their word as well.

The state Republican convention that year adopted an interesting resolution which it incorporated in the party platform. It states: ". . . we reaffirm our devotion to the interest, welfare, and betterment of our faithful political allies, the Afro-American voters of this state, and that we pledge ourselves to use all honorable endeavors to secure for them proper and just recognition in the distribution of the public trust."<sup>18</sup>

In an apparent reference to their support of the Henry Cabot Lodge-sponsored Federal Election Bill of 1892, the convention further stated, "Be it resolved, That we urge upon our representatives in both houses of Congress to use all honorable means in favor of the passage of a national election law by which every citizen of our common country may be guaranteed a free ballot and fair count of that ballot as cast." King County delegate John F. Cragwell followed this resolution with a speech which was heartily applauded at the mention of Abraham Lincoln.

On January 23, 1896 a small group of some of the more prominent men of the race met in the office of J.E. Hawkins and decided among themselves to discourage formation of a separate Republican club, as they felt that such an organization was not in the best interest of the race. They agreed instead to appoint from among those present, a man from each ward to see to it that black people were contacted and urged to join their local ward clubs.

By October of that year, a Frederick Douglass Republican Club had been formed, and many of the men who had urged integration of the ward clubs figured prominently in the leadership of this group. Whether they had experienced rebuffs or felt stronger in dealing with the party as a unit is not known.

Just how often the charge of running a "nigger ticket" was levied against the Republicans by their opponents is open to conjecture, but it was repeated often enough in 1900, referring to the candidacy of Dr. Burdett for Wreckmaster, that the *Republican* commented it. This charge may have been brought against other parties running black candidates from time to time.

Both major parties were accused of trying to buy votes with money and whiskey. William Grose was quoted by a *Telegraph* reporter in 1891 as saying that the Republicans "use money and whiskey to get every vagabond who can be hired to help them carry the election . . ."<sup>19</sup> N. F. Butts spoke publicly of declining money to influence votes in 1889. Many members of the Monte Cristo Independent Club stated that they had been offered gold pieces in exchange for their votes by Republicans in 1892. The Democratic Club secretary, Walter Beale, was offered \$150 to deliver 150 votes for the Republicans that year. So outraged was the executive board of his club by Mr. Beale's meeting with the head of the Republican central committee that the board

impeached him for "suspicious conduct." The *P.I.* even ran a photo of a Democratic candidate talking to an Aframerican from whom the paper says the candidate was seeking to buy votes.<sup>20</sup>

Aframericans were not a real factor in politics despite the expenditure of a great deal of energy on their part. Employment was of paramount importance to the community, but it was an issue which neither major party made any serious attempt to resolve. As the period came to a close, patronage was increasingly more important as a measure of recognition of support. Although Blacks accepted symbolic gestures with gratitude in earlier years, by the turn of the century they increasingly found such treatment unacceptable.

### THE BLACK DEMOCRATS

A small number of persons joined the Democratic Party despite traditional loyalties to the Republicans. To do so was to risk ostracism by other members of the black community, but a few took the chance. Numbers are sketchy, but 58 men were enrolled as members at the October 29, 1891 organizing meeting of the Colored Democratic Club. By February, 1892 their number was reported as 96.<sup>21</sup>

The Seattle Democrats were unique in the state for their courting of black support. Although they were never as solicitous of black voters as were the Republicans, they did seek to attract black support through several devices, the earliest being the 1889 nomination of John Randolph as county delegate to the state convention at Ellensburg. He received the third highest number of votes cast for delegates, but the backbone of the Democratic party in this state, particularly east of the mountains, was largely composed of rural residents, many of southern origin. Upon learning that an Aframerican was selected to sit among them, the September 18, 1889 *P.I.* reports that, a "roar of indignation" went up among members of that convention. Mr. Randolph was represented by proxy.

He was castigated socially and even singled out by the *P.I.* as the lone black Democrat when it announced meetings of the black Republicans.<sup>22</sup> Cayton was to use similar, though more pointed, tactics in denouncing black Democrats. Letters from black men were also sent to the *P.I.* criticizing Democrats and questioning their integrity, sometimes calling them "traitor."

The issue of black people in support of Democrats was a highly emotional one. It was particularly galling to those people who had reached maturity in the South before the Civil War. Dr. Burdett accompanied a bitter denunciation to the *P.I.* with a clipping from an 1853 *New Orleans True Delta* advertisement of the raffle of a "bay horse and a stout mulatto wench Sarah."<sup>23</sup> He called on the wives of Democratic men to bring the article to their husbands' attention in order to arouse their

speakers of the evening.

The following preamble and resolutions were adopted without a dissenting vote:

WHEREAS, We, the H. J. Snively democratic colored club of Seattle, in the name of 1400 registered colored voters of this city and King county, fully realizing that we have not in the past nor present received that recognition due us as members of the republican party; and

Whereas, We claim that as true-born American citizens of this great commonwealth that the ballot should be held sacred, and we most emphatically denounce any attempt to subserve our rights as citizens or as legal voters; and

Whereas, By our independent stand in the present campaign we have been branded as hoodlars, while other parties have declared their intention to do and act as they think best and without receiving such vile epithets; and

Whereas, We claim that inalienable right to think and vote to suit ourselves; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That we, the H. J. Snively democratic club, do hereby indorse the democratic ticket, both county and state, and that on election day we devote our time and all honorable means to secure democratic success.

In 1891 some black people expressed their disenchantment with the Republicans by forming a Democratic Club.

instincts and feelings against alliance with a party which had perpetrated the institution of slavery.

White Democrats in Seattle made some attempts at encouraging the formation of a black Democratic organization in 1890. Prior to the actual formation of a separate body, a few Blacks were nominal members of the local white Democratic Party. N.F. Butts, who had been a Republican prior to his expulsion by the group for being a Democratic agent, reported having been approached with offers of money, and appointed to a committee to secure the registration of black voters.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Butts mentioned some of Seattle's most prominent men, southerners like Junius Rochester, his son Percy, and Colonel Crockett, in the bribery attempt. The accusation, and especially the reported attempt

### Colored Applicants for Office.

Relative to applications for office under the new city administration made by members of the Bynum colored club, the members say that, while they have spread their net in the hope of catching some fish, they want it distinctly understood that they do not expect everything in sight. They simply want reasonable recognition.

Black Democrats, no less than Republicans, sought acknowledgement of their support of the party by political rewards in the 1890s.

that they tried to buy a "nigger," made them very angry, a *P.I.* article reports.<sup>25</sup> As a result of his remarks, Mr. Butts was kicked out of the Democratic party.

The first formal black Democratic organization was guided by Conrad A. Rideout and John A. Coleman in October of 1891.<sup>26</sup> In November of 1891 the Colored Democratic Club changed its name to the W.D. Bynum Democratic Club, taking the name of Congressman Bynum of Indiana. They also adopted the rules and bylaws of the State Democratic Club. It was in Conrad Rideout's office that the organizational meeting of the black Democrats took place. He severed ties with the Republicans in 1882. That year he began the first of three terms as a Democratic legislator in Arkansas.

Rideout was encouraged by the number and position of black men appointed by the Grover Cleveland administration, and by his elections in Arkansas. He always maintained that he not only asked for, but was promised the ministerial post at Bolivia, which went to someone else.<sup>27</sup> In 1895 he sought the consulate position at Antigua in the West Indies. The next year he sought the same position at Cape Town, South Africa. He was active in local and state politics in the 1890s and organized Democratic Clubs among black voters at Roslyn and Spokane in 1892. He also attended the national Colored Democratic conventions in various cities prior to the turn of the century.

He tried to make the National Democratic party structure aware of the Black Democratic effort here, and letters he received from white Democrats in Arkansas, and one from former President Grover Cleveland, were printed in the *Seattle Telegraph* in 1892.<sup>28</sup>

Although he expended a lot of energy in pursuit of a diplomatic post, and finally a state position, his political status in Seattle was not improved from that in Arkansas. The major difference between here and there is that he was in no danger of the mob violence which befell many black politicians in the South as the century came to a close. In 1898 he was nominated for 40th District Representative on the People's Party ticket which was in a Fusion alliance with the Democrats.

John A. Coleman was born in Talladega County, Alabama in 1852. After Emancipation he attended the newly established Talladega College for three years, and then found work on a Mississippi steamboat. Following a four year stay in New York, he moved to Chicago briefly before going to Duluth, Minnesota where he lived for several years. He came to Seattle in 1889, and helped Con Rideout organize the Black Democratic Club in 1891.

By January of 1892 the Club had a suite of rooms on the third floor of the Seattle National Bank Building. The large, well-furnished rooms were separated by folding doors which allowed for conversion to an assembly room. On the walls were red, white and blue bunting and American flags. Newspapers from various western cities were kept on file there. The *Telegraph* of January 27, 1892 remarks that "their club rooms were unsurpassed by any club in the city." The source of funding for such appointments is questionable, although it is very likely that money from the central Democratic organization was contributed since most of the members were employed in menial jobs, which paid no more than \$50 a month.

The Black Democratic Club quartet was very popular and rendered such songs as "Git On Board, Children" and "Chop Him in de Head with a Golden Adze" at meetings around the county. They also serenaded the town after the defeat of John L. Sullivan, the boxer, who had insulted Blacks nationally by his racist pronouncements.

The *Telegraph* was the voice of the Democratic party. As such, it gleefully reported any and all political rifts among Aframericans or rumors of such, and fortunately for researchers today, it recorded many of the activities of the Black Democrats as well.

As seen by the reaction to Mr. Butts's charges, both from a moral and racial standpoint, the Democratic party was not really different from the Republican party in its dealing with black people. Their object, the securing of votes and support, was the same.

There was some participation by Blacks in general party activities, particularly during campaigns. In August, 1892 Con Rideout, as a delegate to the county convention, seconded the nomination of a candidate for judge, mentioning the nominee's participation in the Civil War which resulted in Black Emancipation.<sup>29</sup>

John A. Coleman was the uncontested nominee for Wreckmaster at this convention. In February, 1892 Walter C. Beale, Secretary of the Club, addressed the Second Ward Club and declared himself a "human paradox — a Negro Democrat."<sup>30</sup> He was followed by Thomas Roberts who spoke from the perspective of a black aggrieved workingman. Mr. Beale became a popular speaker that year and spoke at other Democratic meetings, including a mass meeting in the Armory.



John A. Coleman switched political allegiances, running on both Republican and Democratic tickets for minor offices during the 1890s.

Occasionally there was unpleasantness for the black people taking part in activities. Con Rideout endured at least two insults to the race, one by a speaker in 1892 who declared this to be a white man's country at a time when black people were identifying themselves as new Negroes, and Afro-American citizens, and again in 1894 when a speaker at the county convention declared that there was a "nigger in the woodpile in the minority report." This speaker, somewhat embarrassed by his lapse in the presence of Mr. Rideout, apologized immediately. But voices were heard all over the assembly hall in support of his statement: "You're all right. There's two niggers in the woodpile — two of them black fellows . . . ." The speaker then continued, compounding the insult in his correction, saying there was a "colored gentleman in the woodpile."<sup>31</sup>

Black support was not limited to votes cast for the party, and singing or speaking at meetings. Proselytizing efforts, begun with the organization of black men, continued through the turn of the century. Occasionally they tried to take over an independent club.

At least one branch of the Afro-American League was a Democratic front. In September of 1890 eleven men resigned from a club they had joined under the assumption that it was a branch of the League.

### THE INDEPENDENTS

Some of the Independent clubs were able to exist as nonpartisan. Supporters of such clubs were genuine believers in the need for the black man to do his thinking and to vote for his convictions. This was an era when many were losing their lives and the few precious rights that had survived constant erosion by southern Democrats and their northern allies. The Independents sought to avoid the larger issues that were



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**The Seattle *Standard* calls attention to the fact that "the colored Democratic contingent of Seattle has not yet succeeded in getting any of those 'seven white robes' from the present city administration."**

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Brittain Oxendine's newspaper chided black Democrats for their loyalty to a party which failed to keep its promises.

of less pressing concern to black people. These men do not show up on rosters of either the Republicans or Democrats in later years.

Many people did change allegiances during the last decade of our concern. Some of these changes were of long duration while others were more temporary in nature. The shifts were strongly influenced by local events such as the general insensitivity of the Republicans to Blacks and their failure to grant appointive and elective positions to them, the appointment of Blacks to postmaster and other posts of patronage by Democratic President Cleveland, and a gradual loss of confidence in the Republicans' intention to protect the rights of Afamericans nationally.

The appointment of J.F. Cragwell to the State Barber's Commission in 1901 by Democratic Governor John R. Rogers was bitterly opposed by black Democrats because Cragwell was an active Republican. Nevertheless it convinced some Afamericans that their greatest chance for advancement lay outside the Republican party.

The record does not reveal their feelings as a group on such hotly debated issues as the Lodge bill which the South decried as a "Force" bill which, if passed, would bring the return of bayonets to the South to enforce voting rights for Afamericans. A letter from a white Arkansas Democrat to Con Rideout discussed black support against the bill in Arkansas but gives no indication of Mr. Rideout's position.

Seattle's black Democratic constituency remained small until the massive switch from Republican ranks during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

### THE POPULISTS AND THE FUSIONISTS

Black Seattleites had taken notice of the Populists at least since 1894 when George Riley of Tacoma was rumored to be a potential Populist candidate for the Legislature. Some Blacks also were aware of the People's Party Omaha platform of 1896 which demanded a free ballot and equal rights to all. They became involved in Fusion politics following the Populist merger with the Democrats and Silver Republicans in 1896.



George W. Turner joined the Democratic Party in the early nineties.

By that time black Democrats had been organized for five years in Seattle. The Populists carried the state ticket, including the governorship, in 1896. They also awarded patronage to Blacks in Olympia which was continued through 1900 by the Democrats. Mr. Cayton remarks in December of that year that, "Quite a few colored men were given places during the previous four years beginning in 1896." This is interpreted to mean that the Populists performed better than the Republicans in this respect over a comparable period of time.

Con Rideout, Seattle's leading black Democrat, had applied unsuccessfully for two consulate posts in 1896, and another one some years earlier. Finally, in 1898, he sought a legislative office, running for 40th District Representative on the Fusion ticket as People's Party Candidate. But the coalition which had enjoyed outstanding success two years prior barely held together in 1898, and the Fusionists were defeated by the better organized, better financed Republicans. Mr. Rideout placed third in a contest of three candidates, receiving 719 votes to the winner's 1163.

The Fusionists' and the Aframericans' discovery of each other was untimely. Eighteen ninety-eight was a year of decline for the alliance, and so the promise of consideration of black voters was brief.

### **Wants to Debate.**

**C. A. Rideout of this city, the champion of the colored democrats, has been invited by a special committee at Roslyn to speak in that town on the occasion of the anniversary of the signing of the emancipation act. In this connection Mr. Rideout desires, and has issued a challenge to A. A. Garner, to debate the issues of the day.**

Democrats and Republicans were rivals throughout the period.

In October of 1897 the *Northwest Illuminator* began publication. Mr. Cayton asserted that it was a Populist organ, although he later stated that it was an enterprise financed by its owner and editor, George Watkins. In February of 1898 it endorsed the Fusion ticket for the upcoming election, stating that the city's "best interest" lay with that slate.<sup>32</sup>

By June of 1898 the *Illuminator* was no longer in business. It was succeeded by the *Western Sun* which Cayton also stated was formed by the Populists. In June the Populist sheriff appointed W. S. Gayles as deputy sheriff, a position long sought by black Republicans for one of their own.

There was a singular attempt made to reach the mass of black voters during the campaign of 1898. An undated circular bearing the Fusion County ticket on the back was distributed during late October. This advertisement emphasized that the Fusion alliance "considered the Negro voters of sufficient importance in the political affairs of said county to accord them recognition, doing what the Republicans refused to do."<sup>33</sup>

The handbill also stressed the difference in treatment of C.A. Rideout in the Fusion Convention with that of Horace Cayton in the Republican Convention. In the latter case it presumes that the readers were aware of the negative treatment received by Mr. Cayton in his quest for nomination on the state ticket. In the case of Mr. Rideout it states that the convention "went wild" when his name was placed as a People's Party nominee. References are made to the efforts toward fairness by the sheriff and other county officials in recognition of the Aframerican population. The closing paragraph thanks them for "whatever efforts they may have put into support of the Fusionists that have so honorably recognized the Negroes' importance in politics in light of the slap in the face given them by the Republican convention."

This circular, bearing the names of eight well-known men in Seattle, Franklin and Newcastle, caused an uproar in certain segments of the community. In a letter published in the *P.I.* on November 7, 1898, Mr. Cayton calls it a Populist falsehood and states that "the signatures are out and out forgeries."

It is impossible to say what proportion of black voters supported the Fusion effort. Identification of the Democrats and Populists with rural counties of strong southern sentiment, was a sufficient deterrent to some Blacks. Others were alienated by a Seattle Populist's introduction of an 1895 bill which was concerned with the "non-caucasian elements" as competitors of the "white industrial classes of the state."<sup>34</sup> It is to the credit of the Populists that only nine out of a total of twenty-four voted for it.

Nevertheless some telling points had been made, although the Fusionists were unable to garner sufficient votes to carry through their incumbency to the next century. But in the brief period of their ascendancy, they had rivalled the Republicans in patronage and consideration of the black voters, granting them such significant concessions as Deputy Sheriff and the first nomination of a black man from King County for legislative office in the state of Washington.

## *11 Crime & Relationship With the Police*

*"God sleeps at night."*  
—Mauritanian proverb

The lack of work and job opportunities in some cases led to bitterness, a casual regard for work, and illegal activity as well. As the population grew, so did businesses or occupations which were illegal, or considered disreputable by the majority of people in the town.

Law breaking by no means started with a large presence. The earliest record of a black person's involvement in illegal activity is that of a case which involved the shooting and consequent death of an Indian in 1864.<sup>1</sup> During investigation it was found that the shooting resulted when the victim, upon being refused whiskey, broke a window of the home of the assailant, who then shot him in the side. Although fined and found guilty of breaking federal and territorial laws against selling liquor to native peoples, he was not held accountable for the death that occurred, a sad commentary on the status of Native Americans at the time. Another man was convicted twice in 1877 for selling liquor to native people.

Prostitution was established in Seattle quite early in its development. Numerous references to "squaw brothels," "lava beds," "hurdy gurdy houses," and "houses of ill fame" are present in early newspapers. Black women begin to appear in news accounts in 1889, and continued to do so; increasingly, throughout the period of concern. A large percentage of the arrest rate in Seattle for Aframericans and women of various races was due to prostitution.

Before the Fire most of the activity of white American prostitutes was concentrated along upper First and Second Avenues. In the nineties, the notorious Whitechapel area just off Jackson Street was most heavily populated by French, white American, Japanese and Aframerican women. On the tide flats, the disreputable Blackchapel Alley and Zigzag Bridge areas were also the locations of several hovels called "cribs" which were occupied by women of the latter two groups.

Many of the procurers of French and Aframerican women and sometimes white Americans, were black men. Madames of brothels were of several racial and religious backgrounds. Some of them owned the establishments and grew wealthy over the years. The upstairs rooms of the Minnehaha Saloon were used for purposes of prostitution. When Mary Thompson, Aframerican owner of the business died in 1893, she reportedly owned the saloon, "real estate at Butte, Montana, a horse and carriage, considerable jewelry, and ready money on deposit (which) will prove to be nearer \$20,000."<sup>2</sup> Occasionally women of other races, who had similar estates, died in the district.

Although the trade was viewed overwhelmingly as a menace, and a blight on society, there was some benefit to persons who needed jobs and found them in and around those areas. In most established houses there was a piano player who was paid a regular salary, which was quite often more than he could obtain elsewhere. However, he could be arrested on a vagrancy charge which included any person deriving support from an unlawful vocation, as aiding and abetting it in any form, was a violation of the law.

There was also a need for laundresses, cooks, maids and seamstresses and some poor, honest women found employment in these establishments, although they were usually ashamed to acknowledge where they worked. The women included in this list are not to be confused with residents of some of the most notorious brothels in town who primly identified themselves as "seamstress" or "milliner" in the 1900 census.

There were all-black houses of prostitution, houses of one or two races, or in some cases, houses of many races. The Paris House, also known as the House of All Nations, boasted of 600 women from 75 nations.<sup>3</sup>

One of the better-known houses was run by a Creole woman featuring light or white-skinned women of African descent which was called the Creole House.<sup>4</sup> Young women and girls who were recruited in southern Louisiana for "work" in Seattle, arrived to find out that they could not write home and honestly describe their jobs.

Street walkers were uncommon, and a woman showing too much of herself from a window could be arrested for flaunting her vocation. Such women were arrested for beckoning from windows also.

From the mid-nineties some people earned money as gamblers, and keepers of game rooms which were raided whenever the town administration was gripped by a moral spasm. Crap shooting, and illegal card games such as "freeze out," and black jack were popular during the period. They were played in such places as the Dove Dance Hall, and the Blue Front Saloon, which was also called the Bucket of Blood because of the frequency with which violent incidents occurred there.

Various petty crooks made money picking pockets, or assaulting men in alleyways, grabbing their money or jewelry and running. Most stayed in Seattle a few months, then moved on to other places, usually at the persuasion of the police. Although some people made a good living in this floating world, for many it meant despair. Mrs. Ray describes these lower depths in her book. Drug addiction was common, and the suicide and violent death rate in the whole red-light district was higher than in any other part of the city.

The subject of crime among the Black Victorians is a somewhat difficult topic. Throughout much of its history Seattle has had the reputation of being a "wide open" town. Periodically, the city would experience a "moral wave," usually precipitated by a successful crusading office-seeker, newspaper campaign, or temperance advocate. During these periods arrests and convictions increased, but decreased after the moral spasm subsided.

Unlawful acts by Aframericans were reported in the newspapers, and many arrests are included in annual police reports. The latter, however, could be vastly misinterpreted, as there is no information on background of subject, nor cause and circumstance of arrests. During an extensive crackdown, there probably were fewer crimes committed, yet since these campaign were never long lasting, the number of crimes committed was soon up again.

The chief targets during the morality campaign were houses of prostitution and gambling resorts. Both were subject to raids which inflated the arrest rates of Blacks because these places were dependent upon groups of people for their existence. Raids also influenced the arrest rates of other groups in Seattle, such as the Chinese, who were sometimes arrested in groups for violation of the cubic air space ordinance, or being present in places where gambling was taking place. At the time of her jail work from the mid 1890s until 1900, Mrs. Ray reports the jail population as overwhelmingly white.<sup>5</sup>

There were, however, simply lawbreakers: People who were drunk and disorderly or used vile and abusive language to a policeman; committed assaults; shook white children who called them names; were involved in cutting affrays; stole various things; burglarized; fed slugs to



slot machines; picked pockets; sold liquor without a license; smoked opium; forged checks; threatened another person's life; or drove a team faster than a walk around a corner.

Sometimes the law appeared colorblind, and sometimes it did not. In cases involving black and white persons, the former were sometimes given heavier fines or sentences. A black man and a white man stealing copper together in 1891 were fined \$80 and \$50 respectively. In 1901 a black pimp was run out of town but the white prostitute was fined \$50 and permitted to stay.

Mr. Cayton complained in 1901 of the speed with which a young drifter was charged with murder following an incident in a saloon.<sup>6</sup> After being knocked down by the bartender during an altercation, the young man fired a pistol at him, but killed a customer instead. Within one hour of the coroner's inquest a charge of first degree murder was filed against the assailant. The preliminary hearing, normally given in such cases, was suspended. While allowing that the shooting was an "awful crime," Cayton stated that it was "a burning shame to railroad [the assailant] to the gallows simply because he is a Negro." He also mentioned past reports by black people of unfair treatment at the hands of the police.

The "disorderly person" charge was frequently applied to prostitutes. Towards the end of the period it became a catch-all designation which was applied, increasingly, to black men living with, or seen with, white women. In many cases the people were involved in illegal activities in the sporting world, but in other cases they were married, which has never been against the law in Washington.

### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLICE

The issue of police partiality, brutality and harassment has been of great concern in the black community for as long as most people can remember. In fact, instances of such treatment date back at least to the 1890s. When gambling games in N. F. Butt's saloon were raided in September of 1890 he filed an affidavit charging a detective with having warned players in other saloons of the impending raid. The accused filed a criminal libel suit, but the weight of evidence supported Butt's charge, and he was acquitted.

Although the Police Board warned policemen to forego unnecessary force in making arrests in April of 1893, within two weeks of the warning Nelson Vinyerd was to file an affidavit charging that he was beaten by a policeman, with a pistol and club while handcuffed. The affidavit stated Mr. Vinyerd was on his way home to his supper when he was approached by the policeman. When he refused to answer a question, he was beaten and arrested on a charge of drunkenness which was dismissed the following day. The officer pleaded not guilty to the beating

charge. When Mr. Vinyerd appeared before the police commissioners, he was questioned by two commissioners and cross-examined by the officer charged. From his answers, and those elicited by his cross-examination of the arresting officer and a witness to the incident, Mr. Vinyerd's charges of unnecessary violence were substantiated. The drunkenness charge was apparently brought to cover up the officer's actions, and justify the arrest.

Although the officer was censured, the problem did not stop. There was a report of a man being so badly injured that he had to be represented in court by proxy. A black actor was hit on the head several times with a nightstick, yet the policeman was upheld in his use of force as necessary to make the arrest.

Horace Cayton, upon his arrest for libel of Police Chief Meredith in 1901, was almost as indignant over his treatment by the police as he was by the charge. In a statement to a *Seattle Times* reporter he complained bitterly:

*I have been treated outrageously — and as no citizen should be treated. It is my treatment at the hands of the police I wish to have shown up. I was not treated as my rights as a citizen demand that I should have been. . . . I was arrested at a late hour. I was holding a baby in my arms at the time. Before the mother of that babe could come home I was dragged off to the police station like a common criminal.<sup>7</sup>*

At the preliminary hearing Mr. Cayton would again speak of his treatment at his home, the ride to jail in an open patrol wagon, and being locked in a cold, damp cell. His consternation was shared by some white people in the city.

Cayton was to report in his paper later that year, on a case of some boys who were "treated like brutes" at City Hall by the clerk and officer in charge.<sup>8</sup> Declaring that it was not the first time that "persons have been grossly mistreated at the police department" he called on the prosecuting attorney to try them for assault and battery. The officer in charge was suspended for thirty days without pay and the clerk in the case was fired.

The use of unnecessary force against Aframericans and poor whites continued throughout the nineties. Only one death, that of a white man, resulted from a policeman's actions during the Victorian period. Unfortunately, today the kickings and beatings are often supplanted by deadly force.

## 12 Gold Rushes

*"Mr. James Green, well-known depot barber has sailed for the frozen North and wants it distinctly understood that he is going North to dig gold and not scrape faces."*

The Seattle Republican  
May 25, 1900

Men of all races sought gold during and after the settling of the western frontier. Some of the most prominent men in the Aframerican population of the Northwest had been drawn West by the lure of gold. George Riley left Boston and a comfortable life in the barbering trade in order to take the long, perilous journey around the Horn to reach the California gold fields. When William Grose left the Navy as a young man in his twenties, he became a gold miner in California. His family later joined him there.

Ultimately, many black people found life in California intolerable. Following an 1858 convention which agreed on Canada as a haven from persecution, a colony of folk decided on the Fraser River area of British Columbia. Riley and Grose became colonists, later settling in Victoria. Within a few years, Mr. Riley and several other men headed for the Northwest Territories of Canada where they spent the entire period of the Civil War unaware that it had even taken place!<sup>1</sup> Mr. Riley continued his interest in gold mining, and at the time of his death in 1905, he was president of the Tacoma Mining and Smelting Company which owned the Morning Star claim in King County.<sup>2</sup> Joseph Young Moss, father of the late Sandy Moss and Sarah Moss Garnett prospected in Alaska and British Columbia, and had a paying claim in the Olympics called the Good Hope Mine.<sup>3</sup> Cayton's *Special Edition* of January 4, 1896

reported that Henry Todd was president of a mining company capitalized at \$100,000.

In the late 1870s men passed through Seattle to British Columbia in search of gold. Local businesses profited from the rush to the Skagit beginning in the last days of 1879. Here and there, a black miner could be seen in their ranks. The Williams family, in the town of Snohomish during the first thirty years of this century, moved there at the invitation of an uncle, William Shaffroth, who had fared well enough in neighboring gold fields to purchase property valued at \$25,000 by 1895.

For many years prior to the arrival of the "Portland" with its "ton of gold" in July of 1897, a few men had come and gone through Seattle to the northern gold fields. Once the news of the gold ship spread, men flocked to Seattle from all over the country, and in some cases from as far away as Europe, the British Isles, and Australia. Not until World War I would so many strange black men be seen in town again. A few young women also made their way to Seattle looking for work, or hoping to go North. Enough young white women left for the North to make it difficult for some families to keep their help. The Mayor of Seattle went to the Yukon before completing his term in office.

Although most black people left Seattle with the idea of seeking gold, conditions in the Yukon and Alaska were often grim enough to break ordinary men, and to cause some of the stronger ones to look for a livelihood elsewhere. The world had not changed very much. Most of them found work as porters, janitors, or cooks in the towns rather than on mining claims. They were mainly to be found in Dyea and Skagway, Alaska and Dawson, Whitehorse, and Atlin City, Yukon Territory. After the Nome discoveries in 1899, they were increasingly present in Ketchikan, Chinook, Juneau and Nome, Alaska. The vast majority were men, but some intrepid women headed North soon after news broke of the Yukon strikes. They earned money managing restaurants, lodging houses, laundry services, selling milk products, and as keepers and inmates of brothels, although some actually worked claims.

Seattle quickly became a gold rush town following the *Portland's* arrival. For four years, since the Depression of 1893, men had been out of work. Business was very sluggish. Most of the sawmills had shut down. Some townsmen had joined Coxey's army of unemployed for the march on Washington, D.C. Then the town was caught up in trade and outfitting, geared to the endless stream of northern-bound prospectors. Its appearance changed. Almost every sidewalk along First and Second Avenues was overhung with white cotton advertising banners, and stocks of supplies could be seen placed in front of every store and along the sidewalks. Most of the hundreds of items stocked were as strange as the men dressed in their unfamiliar miner's outfits. Large dogs, dog teams, and raw-boned mules became common downtown sights.

Just how many black people, residents and nonresidents, left Seattle for the North is impossible to say. Some remained in Dyce and Skagway earning money in various ways as goldseekers passing through those towns prepared themselves for the final thrust to Chilkoot Pass during the Yukon Rush. With the return of so many broken, crippled men following the Yukon Gold Rush, a certain amount of caution settled in among Seattleites, but people continued to go North. The Nome discoveries attracted many people who sat out the Yukon Rush. Some people already in Dawson found Alaska more profitable and moved there.

A record number of articles of incorporation were filed in 1897. Among them was the Seattle and Klondike Grubstake and Trading Company, formed in September of 1897. It was largely composed of business and professional men who stayed home. The Board of Trustees read like a "Who's Who in Black America of 1897." It included the first black Harvard College graduate, Professor Richard T. Greener who taught at the University of South Carolina during Reconstruction, and who helped to organize the public school system of that state; Edward E. Cooper, editor of the *Colored American*, one of the most important newspapers of the day; Dr. J. L. Wilder, Washington, D.C.'s best known Aframerican physician, who treated black and white persons of status. Local board members included Attorneys J. E. Hawkins and Con A. Rideout, Robert L. Dixon, J. S. Murray and George Grose, Tacoma resident John A. Conna, who had been nominated Republican presidential elector in 1896, and G. S. Bailey, the first Aframerican in the state to serve as Justice of the Peace.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Bailey was the general manager of the company.

The corporation was formed to open stores or trading posts in strategic areas of the Klondike and Alaska. It would also grubstake prospectors and furnish their transportation to the gold fields for one-half interest. Smaller corporations were also formed by Seattle residents around 1900. Among them were the Granite Falls Gold Mining Company, and a mining and loan company operated by Dr. Burdett and others.

**Articles of incorporation were filed yesterday for the Seattle and Klondike Grubstake and Trading Company capital stock, \$20,000, in \$5 shares; trustees, J. E. Hawkins, Con A. Rideout, Edward Anthony, George H. Gross, Robert L. Dixon, Charles Mason, F. J. Terrell, W. M. Marshall and J. S. Murray.**

Corporations were formed by some of the people who stayed home.

Less formal transactions were also made. Mattie Harris recalls a visit from a man who had gone North about 1898. He visited her family in 1900, indicating that he had done some business with her father before his death. "I think people used to grubstake each other . . . But whatever happened, there was no record of it, and that was the end of it. That's the way they kept business those days. They didn't get lawyers to do things, and papers that were signed. [It was] an agreement, and if one died, the agreement was broken."<sup>9</sup> What did he bring? "He brought everything to the house. He brought a 24-pound turkey and nobody had 24-pound turkeys! But he didn't bring any money. He seemed to be quite well-heeled."<sup>10</sup>

Most Afamericans did not indulge their dreams of striking it rich in the northern gold fields. They took work wherever they could find it, or went into occupations utilizing their skills. But from time to time, the rhythm of workaday lives was broken. The excitement of lucky strikes was contagious and some of the most sturdy citizens, unable to resist the excitement and hope, lay down their tools and headed for the gold fields. With luck they would never have to pick up another broom. George Grose, outfitted with gold washing apparatus, sailed to Nome in May, 1900, as did William Rideout. They were joined by Henry Gregg who had been promised a job in Alaska. Mr. Grose returned after three months, during which time he gave up mining and worked as a cook, earning \$125 a month.

It was a hopeful time. Many people saw this as a real opportunity to break out of service or menial work. Upon departure, some of them declared their intentions to do other than the dead-end type of work they performed at home. Some were able to realize their ambitions, but their numbers were small. The *Republican* of May 25, 1900, in reporting the departure of former depot barber James Green, stated that he wanted it "distinctly understood that he is going North to dig gold and not scrape faces." His plans were apparently frustrated as a letter from J. W. Riggs to the *Republican* in late June of 1900 speaks of Green's barber shop.

Walter Beale went North in 1898. He returned to Nome after a vacation in Seattle, and was reported in the March 23, 1900 *Republican* as turning away customers from his \$2 a bunk lodging house.

Former porter, Joe Braxton and his sister Mrs. Minnie Braxton Jones were more successful than most people. The November 16, 1900 *Republican* reports that together they extracted gold worth \$7800 from their Yukon claims. Mrs. Jones later bought a cow and a horse, and peddled milk and butter in the countryside surrounding Dawson. In 1901 she was successfully running a boarding house in Dawson.

Mrs. May B. Mason, thought to be the first black woman to go to the Yukon, returned to Seattle in August of 1898 with \$5000 in gold dust. That year she refused a \$6000 offer for her claim at Hunker Creek in



Mrs. May B. Mason, first black woman to go to the Yukon, returned to Seattle in 1898 with \$5000 in gold dust and a claim in the North for which she refused \$6000.

the Yukon. The *P.I.* reports that for her marriage to Con A. Rideout she wore "a black silk gown, and her ears and fingers sparkled with diamonds."<sup>11</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Cooper left Seattle about 1898 and went to Dawson. Later they moved to Atlin city, in the Yukon and Chinook, Alaska. The *Republican* reports in the June 17, 1898 issue that they were running a restaurant in Skagway, where they charged 50 cents for meals, instead of the 25 and 30 cents received by other places. Mr. Cooper was reported to have valuable claims and to have done well financially in the Chinook area. Mrs. Cooper and two other ladies ran a laundry in Chinook in 1900.

Mrs. Sallie Freeman, a widow, went to Dawson and married I.I. Walker after he established himself in the painting business there. Unfortunately, she contracted an illness in 1900 which forced her to return to Seattle where she died a year later.





Mrs. Jennie Clark, restaurateur, spent ten years in the Far North.

An atypical situation comes to mind which I mention here for interest and because it would otherwise escape the record. William Rudisell, father of Seattle resident, William, went to the Yukon after the turn of the century.<sup>12</sup> He had been stationed near Haines, Alaska as a member of the U.S. Colored Volunteers after the Spanish-American War. He worked as a porter in a furniture store in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, until his employer asked him to keep his darker-skinned "colored" brethren away from the business. After he quit this job, he formed a sled dog team which, in the early part of the century, was known as the fastest dog team in the territory. I do not know of any other Aframericans connected with Seattle who had dog teams in the North, but Pierre Berton mentions a black freight handler in his book, *The Klondike Fever*. Blacks were certainly capable of handling dog teams. Robert E. Peary would never have reached the North Pole without the dog-handling and survival skills of his able assistant, Matthew Henson.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Rudisell married Daisy O'Brien who returned to Whitehorse with him. Their son, William, is said to be the first child of African descent to be born in Yukon Territory. He was born in 1908 in a tent hospital when the outside temperature was 52 degrees F. below zero.

Some people never intended to head for the gold fields, seeking instead to establish businesses in the towns that were springing up in the



This man, like several other black Klondikers, ended up in an occupation similar to those left in Seattle.

Yukon and throughout Alaska. Mrs. Jennie Clark lived at various places from about 1898. She cooked at Dyea, and ran her own restaurant at Dawson in 1900 before moving to Nome, and back again to Dawson to continue her occupation. After spending more than ten years in the North, she returned to Seattle and is remembered by many older residents from 1913 to 1920 for her Bungalow Tea Shop on 24th Avenue, between Denny and Howell.

J. W. Riggs reestablished his barber business soon after his arrival in Dawson in 1898. For years his "Up to Date" barber shop was a sort of clearinghouse for the exchange of news among people from the Seattle area. His letters to the *Republican* were the chief source of information about Seattleites living in the Yukon and Alaska around the turn of the century. He is listed in the *Alaska-Yukon Gazetteer* up to 1908.

Various sporting women left Seattle for the North. The *P.I.* in July 3, 1901 reports that many of the female pickpockets went North where law enforcement was less stringent. Oldtimers still speak of the magnificent furs, diamonds, china, silver and crystal possessed by Seattle women who were formerly in the sporting life in the Yukon and Alaska. Some built substantial brick homes, and donated lovely windows to the church after their return to Seattle.

Some people made respectable sums of money in gold mining. Others lost everything they had, including their health. Following the Yukon Rush in particular, large numbers of men were seen in Seattle who had lost limbs from freezing in the North. Mrs. Ray, in describing

her ministry and that of her husband in the Pioneer Square area, writes of broken men who "had become sick through exposure and hardships."<sup>14</sup>

Poor Stephen Gray lost his mind. He was a well-educated man who had worked as a Pullman porter for many years prior to his relocating in the Ketchikan area. Sailing back to Seattle, he displayed religious fanaticism to such a degree as to believe himself the second Jesus Christ. Shortly after his arrival he was placed in the asylum at Steilacoom.

The number of people mentioned in this account who went North is small. Many other people went, but most did not stay for more than a few weeks, as they found that is was "not what it is cracked up to be." The length of their stays varied. I.I. Walker spent nine years in the Yukon, Thomas Randolph stayed four years, and Mrs. Jennie Clark remained there for ten years.

Back home in Seattle in 1901 Alaska and the Yukon were still topics of conversation and there was traffic between Seattle and the two places, but at a less frenzied pace. Most black people living here continued to work in practically the same jobs as always. Although the ranks of policemen, firemen, and white collar and clerical jobs were thinned by the workers' exodus to the North, their places were not filled by Aframericans.

The Depression ended here before it did in other parts of the country because the city became the chief center of outfitting for the northern gold rushes. Through increased work in the city, better paying jobs, or occasional lucky strikes in the North, a few people were able to move beyond the usual role of menial and become self-sufficient. Blacks benefited by the rushes chiefly by the ending of the common deprivation induced by the Depression of the 1890s.

By 1900 Seattle was flourishing. New buildings were going up all over town. Immigration, encouraged by the railroads, and a national publicity campaign, brought large numbers of new residents to the city. The shipbuilding industry, begun with the production of ships for the gold rush trade, expanded, and was firmly established by the building of war ships for the Spanish-American War. Some of the black people, in quest of gold, or the work it generated in Seattle, became permanent residents whose children and grandchildren live here today.

## Epilogue

By the close of the Victorian period, Seattle had grown from a muddy little village into an expanding metropolis. The status of Blacks changed with the progression of the city into the new century. At no time were they without difficulties. The paradoxes were always clearly visible: the ardent patriot, Manuel Lopes, who had no vote; hotels which accommodated patrons to whom the attached restaurants sometimes refused service. But in the second half of the nineteenth century, Seattle came closer than most places in fulfilling the hopes and dreams of black immigrants looking for a place where a man could be a man, pursuing business, trade, or labor without harassment and proscriptions. In territorial days, and for a few singular hardy individuals in the 1890s, a man could do as much as resources and ingenuity permitted.

Washington never had Black laws as did Oregon, and most of the discrimination encountered by Blacks was largely due to prejudice of individuals. Following the amendment of the Public Accommodations Law service in restaurants, bathhouses, and barbershops was doubtful. The law, now weakened, was still on the books, but subject to varying interpretations. From the latter 1890s until the late 1960s public facilities were approached with uncertainty as to whether or not service would be denied.

By the turn of the century most of the settlers of the 1860s and 1870s had died. Feelings towards Blacks more nearly resembled those prevalent in the rest of the country by that time. The paradoxes continued. J. Edward Hawkins came to Seattle when it was still considered one of the least prejudiced places in the United States. He was greatly assisted in his law studies by white lawyers. By 1905 his practice was successful enough for him to afford a house on Capitol Hill, a highly regarded residential area. But success was a less important credential of acceptance than color, and his neighbors banded together to buy the house in order to prevent his moving into the neighborhood. Hawkins ignored their efforts, moved into the house, and continued his progress towards realization of his ambitions. By the time of his death in 1912, he had served as the first black judge pro tem in Seattle.

The 1898 *Post Intelligencer* obituary of William Grose is symbolic of the changed attitude expressed in newspaper reports about black people then and those written when he was in business during the city's early decades. In territorial days he was known throughout the Puget Sound region as a friend of working men, but the writer of the obituary neglected mention of his earlier days in Seattle, and concentrated on his gigantic physical proportions instead.

Black people continued to come to Seattle after 1901 in small numbers until the migrations of thousands during World War II. The early

Seattleites had nurtured their hopes and dreams of more opportunities and freedoms than were available in their original locations. They had come seeking a place where their children would have a better chance at regular work of more prestige and remuneration than they themselves enjoyed. In general they were frustrated in their desires. In most cases their grandchildren, heirs of their hopes and dreams, would not begin to attain the positions to which they aspired until after World War II.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

### Migration

1. Aptheker, Herbert. *A Documentary History of the Negro People in The United States*.
2. Family opposition in this and other cases stemmed from the fear that the departing member would never be seen again.
3. Quote from author's interview with Mrs. Teresa Dixon Flowers, August 1979.
4. Blacks were legally forbidden residence and property ownership in Oregon from 1844 until after passage of the Constitutional Amendment following the Civil War. The law was loosely enforced.
5. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 September 1889.
6. *Post-Intelligencer*, 21 March 1889.
7. Oral History Interview, BL-KNG-76, em. Leonard Gayton.
8. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 September 1889.
9. *Seattle Weekly Gazette*, 11 May 1865.
10. Mr. Lopes gives his birthplace as Africa in the federal census of 1860, 1870 and 1880. While some persons of Cape Verdean origin in Massachusetts and neighboring states still identify themselves as "Portugese," the term now enjoys about the same status in that community as "Negro" does in the general black population.
11. *Puget Sound Semi-Weekly*, 9 July 1866, p. 6.
12. *Post-Intelligencer*, 4 May 1900, p. 9.
13. A corruption of "Uncle Tom," a concept which refers to the currying of favor with white people.
14. *The Weekly Intelligencer*, 24 February 1868.
15. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 October 1899, p. 12.
16. Harris, Mrs. Mattie V., Transcript, BL-KNG-75-16em, Washington State Archives, 17 July 1975, pp. 50-52.
17. *Daily Intelligencer*, 18 August 1876.
18. Deeds, Volume 6, 4 May 1871, p. 5.
19. *Daily Intelligencer*, 22 April 1876.
20. *Post-Intelligencer*, 24 June 1900.
21. *Post-Intelligencer*, 18 January 1892, p. 8.
22. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 December 1889, p. 1.
23. Written by Rudolph Scott, President of the Spokane Colored Republican Club. Reprinted in Senate Journal, 1889.
24. *The Seattle Republican*, Special Edition, 4 January 1896.
25. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 October 1899, p. 12.
26. *Post-Intelligencer*, 21 October 1900, p. 6.
27. *Daily Intelligencer*, 26 August 1879.
28. *Seattle Times*, 30 October 1901, p. 7.
29. Deeds, Volume 4, p. 766, Undated, probably fall of 1870.
30. *Post-Intelligencer*, 15 January 1895, p. 5.
31. *Post-Intelligencer*, 19 November 1900.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

### Men's Work

1. *Republican*, 9 June 1900.
2. *Post-Intelligencer*, 4 April 1895, p. 8.

3. Ibid., 3 March 1891, p. 2.
4. Quoted in *The Great Seattle Fire*, Austin and Scott, p. 2.
5. *Telegraph*, 17 July 1891.
6. *Republican*, 26 April 1901.
7. Ibid.
8. Hobbs, Richard S., "Horace Cayton — Seattle's Black Pioneer Publisher," *The Seattle Times Sunday Magazine*, February 26, 1978, pp. 8-10.
10. *Republican*, 12 July 1899, p. 7.
11. *Republican*, 22 March 1904.
12. Ibid., Special Edition, 4 January 1896.
13. Quoted in *Post-Intelligencer*, 13 August 1894, p. 4.
14. *Telegraph*, 21 August 1890, p. 8.
15. Ibid., 30 August 1890, p. 8.
16. Ibid., 6 September 1890, p. 8.
17. *Post-Intelligencer*, 13 September 1890, p. 7.
18. Ibid., 30 September 1890, p. 5.
19. *Telegraph*, 6 January 1891, p. 3.
20. Quoted in *Post-Intelligencer*, 19 July 1893, p. 4.
21. *Republican*, 17 June 1898.
22. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 23 March 1900.
23. Author's interview with Mrs. Theresa Dixon Flowers, August 1979.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER III

##### Businesses

1. The exact location of Lopes's building is not known. The 1859 bill of sale does not list an exact location and no record of purchase exists. The sale of the property in 1865 simply describes the site as "lot 6, block 1, in the town of Seattle." The December 26, 1895 *Post-Intelligencer* lists his arrival date as 1852, and states that his building was on the "present site of the Northern Hotel" (the Terry-Denny Building). The *Seattle Times* of December 24, 1895 states that the building was *opposite* the present site of the Northern Hotel. Both obituaries were sources for information about Lopes's early activities in Seattle. Information about the barber chair comes from the author's conversation with Mrs. Theresa Dixon Flowers, daughter of pioneer Roscoe Dixon, and niece of pioneer barber Robert Dixon, in August of 1979.
2. Consistent listing of Lopes as "black" in the census records tends to support his birthplace on the African continent. Cape Verdeans are often listed as "mulatto," indicating a mixture of African and European stock. Locally, persons of mixed African-European ancestry are also listed as "mulatto" or "colored" during various enumerations.
3. *Post-Intelligencer*, op. cit.; *Seattle Times*, op. cit., p. 8.
4. *Post-Intelligencer*, 26 December 1895; *Seattle Times*, 24 December 1895.
5. Deeds, Book 2, p. 78. Undated entry.
6. Mortgages, Volume 1, p. 12, 22 April 1867.
7. *The Intelligencer*, 27 May 1872.
8. *Weekly Intelligencer*, 30 August 1869.
9. Miscellaneous, volume 1, p. 670, 9 April 1888.
10. *Daily Intelligencer*, 2 October 1879.
11. *Weekly Seattle Finback*, 8 December 1879, 16 February 1880.
12. C. W. Austin and H. S. Scott, *The Great Seattle Fire*, p. 28.
13. *Seattle Republican*, Special Edition, 4 January 1896.



14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. *Seattle Times*, 5 September 1949.
17. *Telegraph*, 15 August 1891, p. 5.
18. Author's interview with Mr. Leonard Dawson, April 1975. Mrs. Oxendine also writes, in a letter dated November 24, 1936, that she thinks her father sold the place a few days before the fire.
19. *Daily Intelligencer*, 10 March 1885.
20. Miscellaneous, volume 1, p. 670, 9 April 1888.
21. Mortgage, volume 26, p. 489. 3 December 1888.
22. Oxendine, Lizzie, to Dixon, William and Hazel, 1 November 1936, William H. Dixon Papers, University of Washington Library.
23. *Seattle Republican*, 29 November 1901.
24. Author's interview with Mrs. Gertrude Harvey Wright, September, 1977.
25. *Seattle Republican*, 21 August 1903; 20 May 1904.
26. Undated clipping, John F. Cragwell's Scrapbook.
27. *Post-Intelligencer*, 10 January 1895, p. 8.
28. Ibid.
29. Chattel Mortgage, volume 19, p. 305, and Leases, Volume 5, p. 356.
30. *Telegraph*, 8 December 1891, p. 2.
31. Horace R. Cayton, Jr., *Long, Old Road*; *Post-Intelligencer*, 24 October 1892, p. 4.
32. Hobbs, Richard, "Horace Cayton — Seattle's Black Pioneer Publisher," *The Seattle Times Sunday Magazine*, February 26, 1978, pp. 8-10.
33. *Post-Intelligencer*, 27 May 1893, p. 3.
34. Ibid., 14 August 1895, p. 4.
35. No known copies of either edition exist.
36. Quoted in the *Seattle Republican*, 11 May 1900.
37. Mr. Revels served a year in the Senate, completing the unexpired term of Jefferson Davis.
38. Quoted in *Republican*, June 1900.
39. *Post-Intelligencer*, 20 September 1895.
40. Ibid., 21 May 1901, p. 5.
41. Ibid., 7 October 1897, p. 5.
42. *Seattle Times*, 26 February 1898, p. 8.
43. *Post-Intelligencer*, 8 August 1892, p. 12.
44. Hokey pokey was inexpensive ice cream sold by street vendors from small carts, or from horsedrawn vehicles.
45. Woodson, Fred P., Transcript, BL-KNG-76-65em, Washington State Archives, 16 November 1976, pp. 7-8.
46. *Telegraph*, 17 September 1890, p. 2.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

##### Professions

1. *Post-Intelligencer*, 25 October 1899, p. 8.
2. Ibid.; and *Post-Intelligencer*, 7 November 1899, p. 15.
3. It was impossible to ascertain the nature of Mr. Rideout's business in South Africa. The rumors were never confirmed, and Mrs. Rideout, in letters to the *Republican*, only referred to his being "on business."
4. *Post-Intelligencer*, 16 November 1891, p. 8.
5. *Post-Intelligencer*, 7 July 1898.

- 6 .Dr. Charles Maxwell came to Seattle in 1906 after work in the Indian Service (now Bureau of Indian Affairs) at Tulalip and Neah Bay. A Western Reserve graduate, he placed third highest on the National Medical Boards examination in 1893.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER V

### Property

1. Volume 1, Deeds, p. 354, 18 December 1865. Also volume C, p. 183.
2. Volume 3, Deeds, p. 470, 7 December 1869.
3. Ibid., p. 312, 15 January 1870.
4. Ibid., p. 137, 1 November 1869.
5. Ibid., p. 171, 12 January 1870.
6. A detailed account of Mr. Hedges's transaction and his heirs' suit is reported in the 7 January 1895 *Post-Intelligencer*, p. 5. The will mentioned in the article has apparently been lost since probate proceedings.
7. Volume 6, Deeds, pp. 298-303, 2 May 1872.
8. *Post-Intelligencer*, 22 November 1894, p. 5.
9. Ibid., 7 January 1895, p. 5.
10. Volume 3, Deeds, p. 42, 25 June 1869.
11. Volume 3, Mortgages, p. 565, 11 November 1875.
12. Volume 4, Deeds, p. 414, 5 August 1866. Filed February 13, 1871.
13. Ibid., p. 413, 13 February 1871.
14. Volume 3, Deeds, p. 190, 10 December 1869, 1 October 1869, p. 118.
15. Volume 4, Deeds, p. 657, 9 August 1870.
16. Volume 5, Deeds, p. 454. Undated entry. Will dated 8 March 1881.
17. Volume 81, Deeds, p. 165, 6 September 1889.
18. Volume 126, Deeds, p. 355, 24 March 1891.
19. Volume 121, Mortgages, p. 307.
20. *Post-Intelligencer*, 4 April 1889.
21. Volume 106, Deeds, p. 99, 29 July 1890.
22. Wright, Bonita Riley, to Dixon, William and Hazel, 4 March 1937, William H. Dixon Papers, University of Washington Library.
23. Volume 3, Deeds, p. 67, 6 August 1869.
24. Plats, Volume 1, p. 71.
25. Ibid.
26. Book Number 3, Deeds, p. 574, 20 July 1871, Island County, Washington Records.
27. Author's interview with Mr. George Wright, September 1977.
28. *Post-Intelligencer*, 1 October 1889, p. 2.
29. George Wright Family Paper, p. 2, paragraph 7, 22 October 1977.
30. Op. Cit., *Post-Intelligencer*.
31. Volume 17, Deeds, p. 322.
32. Blacks were not the only people losing land for small amounts due in taxes. In 1871 William Hedges bought lots at school tax auctions for amounts ranging from \$1 to \$9.
33. Volume 17, Deeds, p. 322.
34. *Weekly Intelligencer*, 25 July 1874.
35. Author's interview with Mrs. Mattie Vinyerd Harris, November 1979.
36. Oxendine, Lizzie G., to Dixon, William and Hazel, 1 November 1936, William H. Dixon Papers, University of Washington Library.
37. Volume 2, Patents, p. 150. Mr. Conna also purchased 157 acres from the government for the sum of \$392.67.
38. Volume 3, Deeds, p. 131, 26 October 1869.

39. Volume 4, Deeds, p. 276, 28 May 1870, p. 493, 1 October 1870.
40. The City Directory of Seattle, Washington, 1884-85.
41. Author's conversation with Fred P. Woodson, October 1979. Sanders, Mrs. Mary O., Transcript, BL-KNG-75-17em, Washington State Archives, 12 August 1975, p. 4.
42. Volume AC, Deeds, p. 380, 14 April 1860.
43. Op. cit. City Directory.
44. Author's conversation with Mrs. Corinne Harvey Taylor, July 1975.
45. *Seattle Weekly Gazette*, 27 March 1865.
46. *Weekly Intelligencer*, 24 February 1868.
47. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1875; 9 October 1875.
48. Author's interview with Mrs. Irene Harvey Alexander, November 1979.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Landmark that stood on south side of Madison at the corner of 10th Avenue which was 64 paces around and 12 feet high. *Post-Intelligencer*, 29 October 1892, p. 5.
51. Volume 23, Deeds, p. 190, 13 June 1882.
52. *Post-Intelligencer*, 1 January 1889, p. 7.
53. Oxendine, Lizzie G., to Dixon, William and Hazel J. 1 November 1936, William Dixon Papers, University of Washington Library.
54. Harris, Mrs. Mattie V., Transcript, BL-KNG-75-16em, Washington State Archives, pp. 26-27.
55. *Telegraph*, 23 December 1890, p. 4.
56. *Ibid.*, 26 December 1896.
57. Author's conversation with Mrs. Jacqueline Alexander Lawson, May 1977; Moss, Sandy, Transcript, BL-KNG-75-2em, Washington State Archives, 22 April 1975, p. 43.
58. Op. cit., Harris, p. 3.
59. *Seattle Republican*, 23 August 1901.
60. Kirk, Mrs. Priscilla M., Transcript, BL-KNG-75-9em; Washington State Archives, 18 June 1975, p. 14.
61. Mrs. Emma Ray, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*.
62. Op. cit., Harris, pp. 27-29.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER VI Women and Social Life

1. Federal census, 1880. Mrs. Stevens's mother was born in Africa. Her English-born husband was white, possibly Jewish.
2. *Post-Intelligencer*, 6 January 1900, p. 5.
3. Harris, Mrs. Mattie Vinyerd, Transcript BL-KNG-75-16em, Washington State Archives, 19 July 1975, p. 19.
4. Volume 8, Deeds, p. 123, 16 December 1873.
5. Volume 25, Chattel Mortgage, p. 115, 26 February 1895.
6. Volume 31, Chattel Mortgage, p. 26, 8 December 1899, "Refrigerator" is actually listed as part of the inventory.
7. Volume 121, Mortgages, p. 307, 16 October 1894.
8. Volume 6, Conditional Sales, p. 428, 26 October 1898.
9. Mrs. Emma Ray, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*, p. 39.
10. The City Directory of Seattle, Washington Territory, 1884-85.
11. Volume 30, Chattel Mortgage, p. 158, 24 November 1897.
12. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 July 1901, p. 6.
13. Author's interview with Mrs. Theresa Dixon Flowers, August 1979.
14. *Seattle Times*, 3 December 1895, p. 3.
15. Op. cit., Harris, p. 5.

16. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
17. Oxendine, Lizzie Grose, to Dixon, William and Hazel, 1 November 1936, William Dixon Papers, University of Washington Library.
18. Ibid.
19. *Post-Intelligencer*, 5 October 1892, p. 5.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER VII Education

1. Harris, Mrs. Mattie, Transcript, BL-KNG-75-16em, Washington State Archives, 17 July 1975, pp. 6-7.
2. Author's interview with Mrs. Theresa Dixon Flowers, Portland. August 1979.
3. *Post-Intelligencer*, 27 July 1898.
4. Ibid., 27 October, 1891, p. 3.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII Religious Life

1. Souvenir Program of the Fiftieth Anniversary Service of the First A.M.E. Church Edifice/1912-1962, p. 1.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Author's interview with Mrs. Gertrude Harvey Wright, September 1977.
6. *Post-Intelligencer*, 30 June 1894. Sprinkling is the most common form of baptism in the A.M.E. Church, but immersion was practiced in the early decades of the church's existence. In his wife's book, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*, p. 58, Mr. Lloyd Ray states that he was baptized in Lake Washington.
7. *Republican*, 20 April 1900.
8. Ibid., 21 June 1901.
9. *Post-Intelligencer*, 22 February 1899.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ray, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*, p. 71.
13. *Post-Intelligencer*, 13 June 1898.
14. *Post-Intelligencer*, 19 May 1891, p. 8.
15. Souvenir Program of the Fiftieth Anniversary Service of the First A.M.E. Church Edifice, p. 7.
16. *Post-Intelligencer*, 28 November 1890, p. 8.
17. Author's interview with Mt. Zion Church Historian, Mrs. Elizabeth D. Wells, January 1976.
18. Grand Souvenir Program of the 23rd Anniversary of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, January 27-29, 1915.
19. *Post-Intelligencer*, 19 February 1894, p. 5.
20. Ibid., p. 5.
21. Ibid., 5 May 1894, p. 8.
22. Ray, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*, pp. 41-43.
23. *Post-Intelligencer*, 2 June 1895, p. 8.
24. Ibid., 12 April 1899, p. 5.
25. Register, St. Clement's Church, 1891-1954.
26. Author's interview with Mrs. Theresa Dixon Flowers, August 1979.
27. Author's interview with Mrs. Mattie V. Harris, November 1979.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX  
Organizations

1. *Post-Intelligencer*, 23 July 1890, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1890, p. 8.
3. *Seattle Telegraph*, 3 September 1891, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, 2 March 1892, p. 5.
5. The Great Depression of the 1890s is generally dated from 1893. In Seattle and other places in the Puget Sound region unemployment and scarce money was evident by late summer of 1892. The general economic climate of the second half of the year is summed up in the *Post-Intelligencer* of 13 December 1892, p. 5.
6. *Seattle Republican*, Special Edition, 4 January 1896; *Republican*, 23 August 1901.
7. *Post-Intelligencer*, 20 October 1898.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1892, p. 3.
10. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1893, p. 5.
11. *Post-Intelligencer*, 10 May 1890.
12. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1890, p. 2.
13. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1891.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Seattle Telegraph*, 13 April 1892, p. 5; April 14, 1892, p. 2.
16. *Post-Intelligencer*, 3 February 1892, p. 8.
17. *Ibid.*, 18 September 1890, p. 8.
18. *Ibid.*, 21 March 1894, p. 8.
19. *Ibid.*, 27 June 1894, p. 8.
20. *Ibid.*, 29 July 1894, p. 2.
21. *Ibid.*, 18 February 1899, p. 6.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, 7 October 1900, p. 6.
24. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1894, p. 8.
25. *Ibid.*, 9 October 1895, p. 5.
26. *Post-Intelligencer*, 30 July 1899, p. 5.
27. Aptheker, Herbert A., *Documentary History of the Negro People of the United States*.
28. *Post-Intelligencer*, 19 January 1901, p. 6.
29. *Seattle Times*, 11 April 1901, p. 8.
30. *Ibid.*, 23 January 1901, p. 7.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Post-Intelligencer*, 28 November 1899, p. 6.
33. *Spirit of Seventy Six/America for Americans*, 29 May 1895.
34. No known copies exist. Booklet was advertised in the *Seattle Republican* during the fall of 1901.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X  
Politics

1. The Reverend Mr. Hiram R. Revels, father of Mrs. Susie Revels Cayton, established schools for freedmen in St. Louis, Missouri and various parts of Mississippi before becoming the first black United States Congressman. A fine description of such work is found in Pauli Murray's autobiography, *Proud Shoes*.
2. Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina were the exceptions.
3. *Post-Intelligencer*, 18 September 1889.
4. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1889; 23 September 1889, p. 1.

5. *Ibid.*, 18 October 1888.
6. The expectations of Blacks were summed up in a speech from Rudolph Scott of Spokane which was read on the Senate floor.
7. *Post-Intelligencer*, 12 December 1891, p. 1.
8. Journal of the Senate, State of Washington, Olympia, 1889-90.
9. *Seattle Republican*, Special Edition, 4 January 1896.
10. *Post-Intelligencer*, 5 August 1895.
11. *Ibid.*, 13 August 1894.
12. *Ibid.*, 29 October 1894.
13. *Seattle Republican*, 26 October 1900.
14. *Seattle Telegraph*, 29 October 1891, p. 8.
15. *Post-Intelligencer*, 31 December 1896.
16. *Seattle Republican*, 26 February 1896.
17. *Seattle Telegraph*, 23 October 1892.
18. *Post-Intelligencer*, 6 August 1892, p. 8.
19. *Seattle Telegraph*, 15 August 1891, p. 5.
20. *Post-Intelligencer*, 11 March 1900, p. 10.
21. *Seattle Telegraph*, 25 February 1892, p. 5.
22. *Post-Intelligencer*, 5 September 1889; 11 September 1889.
23. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1891.
24. *Post-Intelligencer*, 14 September 1890, p. 8.
25. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1890.
26. *Seattle Telegraph*, 23 October 1892; 29 October 1891, p. 8.
27. *Post-Intelligencer*, 20 October 1899, p. 10.
28. *Seattle Telegraph*, 24 July 1892, p. 8; 2 October 1892, p. 4.
29. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1892, p. 3.
30. The *Post-Intelligencer* says "negro Democrat"; the *Telegraph* says "nigger Democrat," *Telegraph*, 25 February 1892, p. 5.
31. *Post-Intelligencer*, 23 September 1894, p. 2.
32. *Seattle Times*, 26 February 1898, p. 8.
33. *Post-Intelligencer*, 8 November 1898.
34. House Journal, House Bill, Number 184, Section 11, Olympia, 1895.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER XI

##### Crime and Relationship with the Police

1. *Seattle Weekly Gazette*, 21 November 1864.
2. *Post-Intelligencer*, p. 5, 18 January 1893.
3. Heller, Herbert L., *Sourdough Sagas*, p. 126.
4. Ray, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*, pp. 75, 84, 86.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
6. *Seattle Republican*, 22 November 1901.
7. *Seattle Times*, 25 March 1901, p. 1.
8. Op. cit., *Republican*, 29 November 1901.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER XII

##### Gold Rush

1. Wright, Bonita Riley, to Dixon, Hazel J., 4 March 1937, William Dixon Papers, University of Washington.
2. Mineral Location, volume 9, p. 305, 9 September 1903.
3. Author's conversations with Mrs. Sara Moss Garnett and Mr. Fred Woodson, December 1979.

4. Harris, Mrs. Mattie Vinyerd, Transcript BL-KNG-75-16em, Washington State Archives, 17 July 1975, p. 19.
5. Ibid.
6. Chattel Mortgage, Volume 36, p. 109. 28 December 1898.
7. Author's conversation with Mrs. Sara Oliver Jackson, December 1979.
8. *Post-Intelligencer*, 19 September 1897, p. 2.
9. Op. cit., Harris Transcript, p. 19.
10. Ibid., p. 19.
11. *Post-Intelligencer*, 30 August 1898, p. 5.
12. Author's interview with Mr. William X. Rudisell, September 1975.
13. Bradley Robinson's *Dark Companion* provides an excellent description of Matthew Henson's contribution toward the discovery of the North Pole.
14. Ray, *Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed*.



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- William Dixon Papers. Manuscripts Division, University of Washington Library, Seattle. This collection contains letters from Mrs. Lizzie Grose Oxendine, including her "Memories" of Seattle and the black community from 1889 until about 1895. The letters, written in 1937, were very valuable to this study. A 1936 letter from Mrs. Bonita Riley Wright to Mrs. Hazel Dixon was also valuable. A few photographs are part of the collection.
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